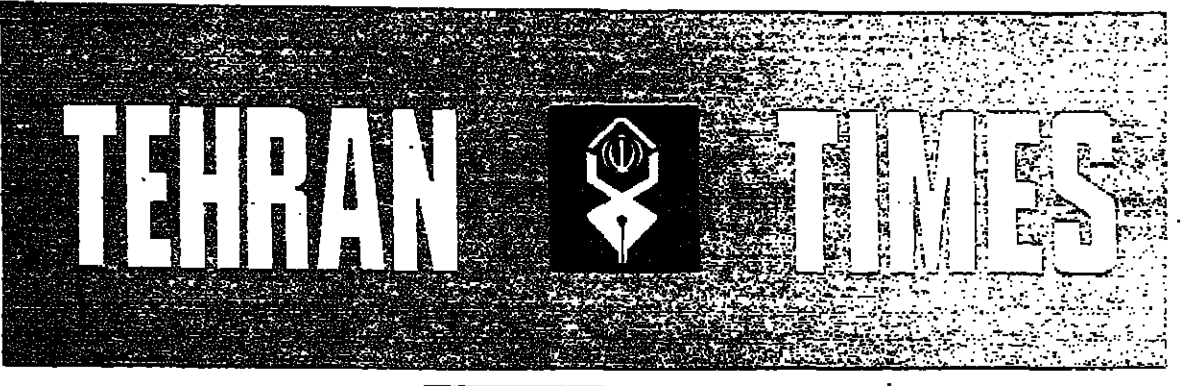




Velayati Condemns Zionists' Building New Settlements

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati in a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan said that the recent decision of Israel to build 6,500 new houses at Har Homa is in line with the long-term strategy of the Zionist regime geared towards Judaization and changing of the geographic, demographic and religious status of Palestine in general and of the city of Bait-ul-Moqaddas in particular.

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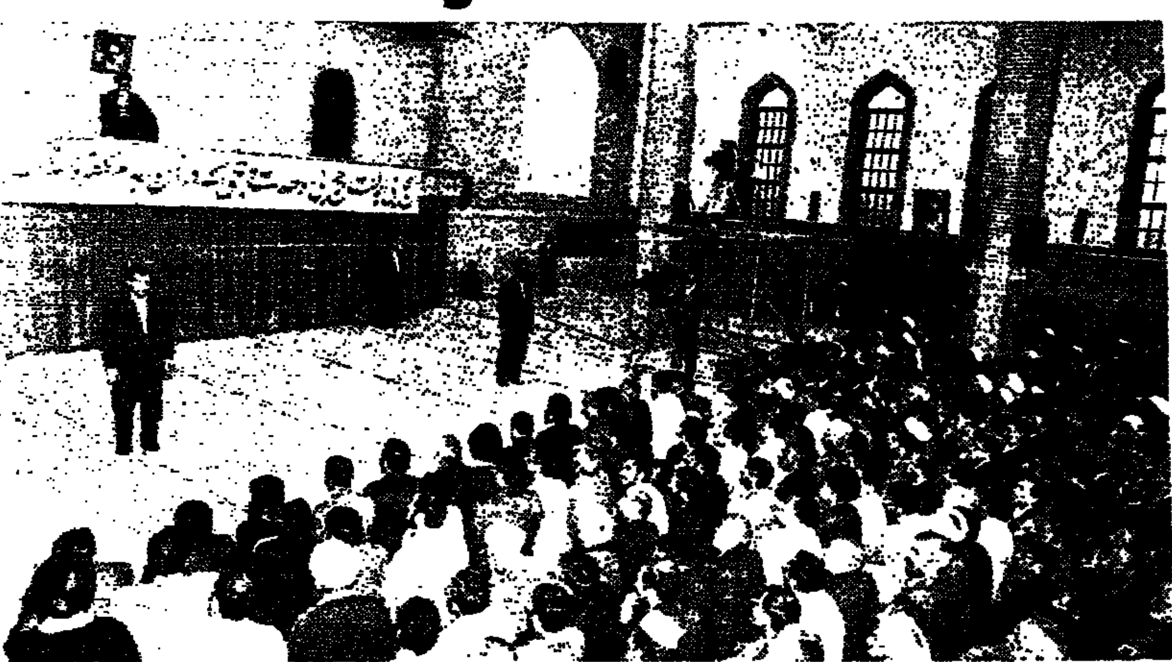
Yeltsin, Lukashenko Unite Against NATO Expansion

MOSCOW – Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his Belarussian counterpart President Alexander Lukashenko closed ranks against NATO expansion during a summit here Friday, warning of a "dangerous confrontation."

"Our countries are unanimous in rejecting the plans for eastward expansion of NATO, which could lead to new division lines on the continent and could create a dangerous confrontation," a joint statement quoted by Interfax said.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Hajj Ritual Manifests Glory of Islam



TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said here on Thursday that Hajj ritual manifests the glory of Islam and serves to boost the morale of Muslims.

In a meeting with officials in charge of Hajj pilgrimage, the Leader said the Hajj ritual is aimed at promoting political, economic, morale power of Muslims as well as the universal prestige of Islam.

On the all-out assault of the global arrogance against the world of Islam, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Today, the arrogant powers take hostile actions against the states where their interests are threatened by Islam, by imposing war, arming their opposition groups and exerting propaganda, economic, political and security pressures on them."

"Hostility to Islam is a major policy being pursued by the arrogant powers," the supreme Leader pointed out.

Creating division and sowing discord among Muslim communities are clear indications of the world arrogance's hostility to Islam and Muslims, the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged the Islamic nations to strengthen their solidarity and unity vis-a-vis the enemies of Islam and the holy Qoran and anyone who attempts to separate the hearts of Muslims from one another has betrayed Islam and the Muslims.

The Leader underlined the significance of the disavowal of unbelievers ceremony during Hajj pilgrimage and said that at a time when the enemy has made large extent investments to disunite Muslims, the Hajj ritual can be very meaningful and can serve to foil the plots of the global arrogance. (IRNA)

Problems in Tehran-Ankara Relations Removed

KHORRAMABAD, Lorestan Prov. – Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs said on Thursday problems in Tehran-Ankara relations have been removed in light of adoption of timely measures by the two sides.

Deputy Minister Allaeddin Boroujerdi said in a televised interview that Iran's principled policy was based on maintaining good relations with its neighbors in the best possible manner.

The bilateral relations severed for a short period of time recently due to allegations leveled by Turkey against Iran.

On the martyrdom of the head of Iran's Cultural Center in Multan, Pakistan of Seyed Mohammad Ali Rahimi in February 1997, Boroujerdi said that continued and serious efforts were launched both in Tehran and Islamabad to identify agents responsible for the crime.

He said that presently a ranking Iranian delegation has travelled to Islamabad to probe into the issue.

He added that Iran would take follow-up measures until the Pakistani government decisively punishes the culprits.

He expressed hope that the Pakistani government would consider its pre-election commitment of "iron fist policy against sectarian elements" and thus identify and punish agents responsible for the crime as soon as possible.

(IRNA)

Khuzestanis Awaiting Leader's Arrival

AHWAZ – Governor General of Khuzestan Province Mohammad Hossein Moqimi said here yesterday that the people of Khuzestan Province were anxiously awaiting the arrival here Saturday of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei.

He said the courtesy visit to the province by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution would be a memorable incident in the minds of the people of the province who had suffered the hardships of the eight years of sacred defense against the Iraqi forces.

The governor general of the province on Friday visited an exhibition that offered goods produced by former voluntary combatants and other goods offered directly by producers and manufacturers. (IRNA)

FMI Nominates Candidate for Presidential Elections

TEHRAN – The Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI) nominated Ebrahim Yazdi as its candidate for the presidential elections, the FMI said in a statement on Thursday.

The statement criticized the government for "ignoring the rights of the political groups envisaged in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The statement maintained that "the political groups and independent parties who are against the performance of the government, but, loyal to the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and committed to the constitution are deprived of the least facilities to run for the elections."

The FMI claimed that it would take part in the presidential poll not for seizing power but to force the authorities to retreat before the nation and to give way to free activities of the independent political parties.

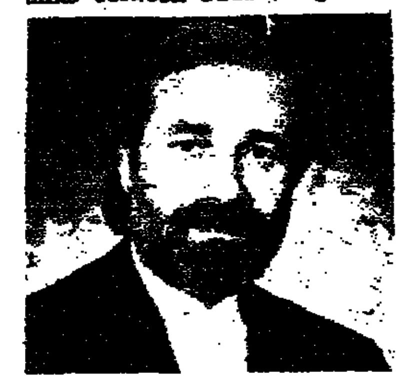
The statement called on the

(Contd on Pg.14)

Sudan, Uganda, Zaire, Ethiopia to Open Peace Talks

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Iran's accredited ambassador to Uganda, Seyed Mohammad Kazem Tabatabaei, here said that quadrilateral peace talks between Sudan, Uganda, Zaire and Ethiopia are to be held in Kampala in the near future.



TABATABAEI

Speaking in an exclusive inter-

(Contd on Pg 14)

Thousands March in Protest of Israeli Construction Plans

UN CRITICIZE ISRAEL'S SETTLEMENT PLAN

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (March 5): Masked Palestinians students burn an Israeli flag during an anti-Israel protest in Bethlehem university. The protest was held against the Israeli government decision to build new Jewish neighborhood in East Bait-ul-Moqaddas. (AFP PHOTO)

Compiled From Dispatches

TEHRAN – Thousands of Palestinians held a peaceful prayer protest Friday on a disputed East Bait-ul-Moqaddas hill where Israel plans to build a large Jewish neighborhood.

Waving Palestinian flags, more than 2,000 marchers chanted "shame and disgrace on the Israeli government."

When the Muezzin called for Muslim noon prayers from a nearby mosque, worshipers spread straw and plastic mats between bushes on the rocky ground and knelt in devotion.

"If we do not succeed in stopping them from building...It means that the peace process will

(Contd on Pg.14)

Yaqubi Urges PGCC Not to Repeat Futile Statements

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council needs to undergo a structural reform regarding its behavior and policies, Iran's ambassador to Muscat, Oman, Siyavosh Zargar Yaqubi, told the *Tehran Times* on the eve of the two-day meeting of the PGCC foreign ministers which is slated to open today.

Asked whether there will be a change in the stances of the council, Yaqubi said that although there are certain positive indications in this regard, I think there will be no principal change in the council's stances. The PGCC needs to reconsider its political behavior and policies and take heed of the realities.

Repeating biased statements by the PGCC will cause insecurity in the region, he said adding therefore, Iran will have no option but to strengthen its defensive capabilities.



YAQUBI

Iran has always extended a hand of friendship toward the re-

(Contd on Pg.14)

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In the Name of God

And if they intend to act unfaithfully towards you, so indeed they acted unfaithfully towards Allah before, but He gave (you) mastery over them; and Allah is Knowing, Wise.

(HOLY QORAN) (8:71)

OPINION

Recognition of Taleban, Violation of Human Rights

One of the key members of the Taleban, Mulla Vakil Ahamad told the Islamabad-based *News* dailyThursday that his group was going to garner international support to receive recognition through its newly opened office in New York. He also said that the group is trying to convince the UN to allot Afghanistan's UN seat to the Taleban.

Vakil Ahmad also disclosed that the U.S. would reorganize his group if a few Islamic countries recognized it.

The UN is well aware of the Taleban's atrocities against men and women in Afghanistan: Banning girls from attending schools and offices, forcing men to grow beard and follow odd instructions as well as banning filming and photograph of live objects, and liquidating the opposition are among some of the day-to-day affairs in Afghanistan under the Taleban. If these are not violation of human rights, then what are they?

As one of international advocates of human rights, the UN shoulders a very heavy responsibility with regard to the issue of Afghanistan. The world body should shun double-standard, for in some cases the UN Human Rights Commission condemns certain countries for slightest violation of human rights.

The Islamic countries too shoulder a heavy responsibility in this regard. Indeed any recognition of the group by any Islamic country will be interpreted as an approval of the heinous crimes of the group which are carried out in the name of Islam. Hence recognition of the Taleban will be a treason to Islamic countries.

The responsibility of the Islamic countries becomes heavier as the U.S. has announced that its recognition of the group is subject to that of few Islamic countries. Therefore the recognition of Taleban by any Islamic country will practically pave the way for the U.S. recognition.

We know that the Taleban have come to power in Afghanistan with the financial and moral support of the U.S. When the Taleban came to power Clinton withheld their recognition in order to garner women's votes in the presidential elections.

Although the threat of losing women's votes stands no more, the Taleban mistreatment of women is still in full swing. In case the U.S. recognizes the Taleban, the whole world will realize its double-standard in yet another clear instance of violation of human rights. The U.S. has allowed the group to open an office in New York which is the first step towards its recognition.

It should be borne in mind that recognition of the Taleban is itself a violation of human rights.

President Rafsanjani Praises Services of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here Thursday appreciated the services provided by Imam Khomeini Relief Committee to the needy families.

Speaking to the members of the Central Council of the committee on the occasion of its establishment anniversary, the president said that foundation of the charity organization with a limited capital provided by people is among the honors of the Islamic Revolution.

President Rafsanjani added that Iran has acquired valuable experiences in helping the needy families overcome their problems and is ready to offer the experiences to other countries.

Head of the committee Habibollah Asgar Owladi said at the meeting that the Iranian people donate Rls.200 billion in cash to the committee annually. The figure is expected to double to Rls.400 billion next year.



Asgar Owladi said that government has allocated Rls.170 billion in credit to the committee to be spent next year.

Kharrazi: Zionists Not to Give Up Occupation Policies



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The blatant plots of the Zionist regime to expand settlements in the occupied territories of Palestine aim at changing the basic characteristics of the territories to keep up its occupation policies, Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations Kamal Kharrazi said on Thursday.

Kharrazi made the remark while addressing an emergency session of the UN Security Council on the Israeli expansionist policy, an IRNA report said.

He added that the Zionists' policy is being pursued in blatant contravention of international law and in open defiance of clear provisions of numerous United Nations resolutions, including those adopted by the council itself.

Kharrazi noted that under the prevailing circumstances in the aftermath of the Cold War, it is indeed very difficult to conceive that violation of the most fundamental principles of the international law could be perpetrated with such a sense of impunity. The only explanation seems to lie in the fact that Israel has realized that the Security Council is not prepared to live up to its commitments to stop aggression, thanks to the unqualified and continuous support of certain members.

Had the council adopted concrete measures in the past to effectively discharge its obligations in the face of Israeli persistent intransigence, we would not have faced the present calamity, he added.

He continued by saying that the recent decision of Israel to build 6,500 housing units in Bait-ul-Moqaddas is also designed to change the Islamic character of the city in the continuous process of Judaization of the historic city of Bait-ul-Moqaddas which is sacred to all Muslims.

Kharrazi said, "As the first Qibla of Muslims, Al-Qods al-Sharif has a special place in the heart of every Muslim, presuming that illegal continuation of occupation, imposition of demographic changes in Bait-ul-Moqaddas as well as daily harassment of the Muslim inhabitants of the city, would fade away the love and devotion of every Muslim to this holy city is only a pure illusion and, as such, out of touch with reality and, in the final analysis utterly impracticable."

History attests to the fact that Muslims have always comprised the majority of inhabitants in Bait-ul-Moqaddas and any claim to the contrary is not only a mere fabrication of historical facts but an insult to human conscience, said the Iranian official.

He added that the whole Islamic countries are united on this position and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), that owes its raison d'etre to the Muslims' response to an act of arson against Al-Aqsa Mosque in Bait-ul-Moqaddas, has always condemned the Israeli practices in Palestine and called for liberation of the city of Al-Qods al-Sharif.

The Iranian representative went on to say that the urgency of forceful action by the Security Council becomes all more imperative in the light of the fact that the leaders of Zionism entity are intent on building the new illegal settlements despite outrage of the local inhabitants and expression of condemnation from all over the world.

The Security Council should condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the decision of Israel to build new settlements in Bait-ul-Moqaddas. It should also take the necessary measures, in accordance with the charter, to reverse this decision, Kharrazi concluded.

UAE Sailors Rescued

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Five sailors from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were rescued by the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday.

According to IRNA, the sailors' voyage had gone wrong and their barge was sunk off Siri Island in the Persian Gulf.

Int'l Exhibition of National Art Created by Women to Open Today

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — An International exhibition on national arts created by women titled, 'Art' is to open here today coincident with the International Day of Women (March 8).

The exhibition provides an atmosphere for cultural exchange among the women from different countries and a platform for presenting moral and humane values and characteristics of different cultures. It is also to counter the destruciton of national identity through assimilation of cultures.

Women from 30 countries will participate in the exhibition which is to be held in Andisheh Cultural Center here March 9-10.

Some of the participating countries include Syria, Palestine, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Pakistan, India, Sudan, South Africa, Egypt, Hungaria, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Romania, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Zargar on Damages Inflicted on Ardebil Province

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Interior Ministry's Headquarters for Minimizing Effects of Natural Disasters, Rasoul Zargar, announced here Thursday that 12,000 housing units were damaged by between 40 to 100 percent, while 105 educational, 40 medical, 9 communications establishments as well as 30 water supply units were totally destroyed as a result of the last Friday quake in northwest Iran.

A tremor with a magnitude of 5.5 hit Ardebil Province killing over 966 persons and injuring over 2,600 others. The quake was felt in four other provinces.

Zargar added that some 30 villages out of the 99 damaged, are leveled to ground in the quake, IRNA reported.

The preliminary assessment of the damages will be made within the next few days, he said.

Zargar said that temporary settlement of quake victims was completed within 48 hours after the tremor.

Some 5,000 relief workers using 350 light machinery, 120 heavy machinery, four helicopters and over 100 ambulances continue rushing relief assistance to the victims.

So far, he said, more than 10,000 tents, 30,000 blankets, 95 tons of plastic sheets and 100 tons of foodstuff have been distributed among the quake victims in Ardebil Province.

Meanwhile, Zargar added that the quake which hit Bojnourd in northeast Iran on February 4 inflicted Rls.16,000 million damage in governmental sector and 75,100 million in non-governmental sector.

The Interior Ministry official said that Rls.5,000 million has been put at the disposal of the provincial Headquarters for Minimizing Effects of Natural Disasters.

Norway, Japan, Italy and three international organizations have contributed $380,000 in cash and in kind to the quake victims in Bojnourd.

Some 88 people were killed and 1,948 others injured while 11,000 homes were destroyed in 173 villages by more than 40 percent. 5,000 houses were leveled to ground and 21,000 head of livestock were killed as a result of the quake in northeast of Iran.

According to another report from Ardebil, Director General of the provincial Endowments and Charity Affairs Office Barat Mirzaei said on Thursday that some 118 mosques were damaged as a result of the killer quake.

Talking to IRNA, Mirzaei said that of the mosques, 60 were completely destroyed and 58 others sustained damage between 30 and 60 percent.

Mirzaei put the total losses inflicted on mosques across the province at Rls.15 billion.

Serbian President Calls For Expansion of Relations With Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Serbian president told the visiting Iranian charge D'affaires in Belgrade of Serbia's interest in expansion of allout relations with Iran.

The Serbian president, meanwhile, sent a message to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, condoling him and the people of Iran on the earthquake disaster in Ardebil.

Meanwhile, Head of Tehran-Paris Parliamentary Friendship Association Patrick Devedhan sent on Friday a condolence message to the Iranian Ambassador to Paris Hamid Asefi on the recent quake in Ardebil Province of Iran. Devedhan in the message expressed regret over the incident and voiced sympathy with survivors of the tragic event.

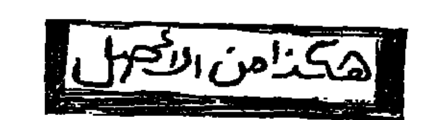
Also a number of Bosnian officials attended Iranian embassy in Sarajevo on Thursday to condole Iranian embassy staff on the recent quake in northwestern Iranian Province of Ardebil. Bosnian Federation Speaker along with deputy head of parliamentry representatives' House and Bosnian culture and education minister condoled with Iranian ambassador to Sarajevo on the natural disaster.

A number of local school students also offered help to the Iranian children at the quake-torn areas.

Austrian president also cabled a message of condolence to President Hashemi Rafsanjani on the earthquake in Ardebil Province.

The Austrian president's message voiced sympathy with the Iranian people and survivals of the disaster in Ardebil.





Emami Kashani Praises Tactfulness of Turkish President



TEHRAN — Substitute Leader of Friday congregational prayers Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani in his second sermon to thousands of worshippers here Friday expressed confidence that poverty would be uprooted with the mutual contribution and joint efforts of the people and the administration.

He also offered his personal condolences to families bereaved in Ardebil Province of Iran in the earthquake of Friday, February 28, and also appreciated the voluntary donations and contributions of the people nationwide to quake victims.

Elsewhere in his second sermon, Ayatollah Emami Kashani referred to the upcoming presidential elections, the seventh in post-revolution Iran, expressing confidence that the ranks and file of the citizens would turn out at the polls and cast their ballot for the candidate of their choice, and thereby demonstrate their political maturity. He said the administrators of the state should have good knowledge of and care about the values that the people cherish, and that every institution in the country must acknowledge its debt to the people and respond to their acts of self-sacrifice.

Ayatollah Emami Kashani also referred to certain small but unwelcome developments in the relations between Iran and Turkey saying the situation had been solely the result of a conspiracy of the common enemies of the two neighboring countries. He also appreciated the tactfulness of the Turkish president which, he said, had demonstrated by sending a delegation to Tehran to clear the small clouds in the relations of the two countries.

The substitute leader of Friday congregational prayers also deplored the unceasing spread of Zionist settlements on the occupied lands of the Muslims stressing that Zionism would eventually have to be destroyed root and branch by a united Muslim Umma placing their trust in God. (IRNA)

Yemeni Minister: Iran, Best Model for Muslim World

SHAHR-E-REY — Yemeni Minister of Religious Endowments and Guidance Ghalib Abd al-Kafi al-Qurshi said here on Thursday that having laid down the foundation of a new and progressive Islamic civilization, Iran can be a model for the Muslim world.

Al-Qurshi said that Muslim world was in need of a practical pattern at present to revive the Islamic civilization and bring about Muslims' renaissance and Iran could provide such a pattern.

He said that attention to the holy Qoran, expansion of Qoranic sciences and struggle against indecencies were among Islamic virtues he observed in Iran during his stay.

He added that unity of the Muslim world, promotion of religious values and coordination among Muslim people in their struggle against blasphemy were important factors which would prove effective in campaign against cultural encroachment of the enemies.

Al-Qurshi, who arrived in Iran on Monday heading a delegation, termed outcome of his visit helpful.

He said that based on a memorandum of understanding, signed by him and the Iranian cultural officials in the course of the visit, Iran and yemen would cooperate in improving their libraries, renovating mosques as well as historical and religious monuments.

He added that Iran would cooperate with Yemen in publishing a Yemeni Qoran at one of Iranian publication centers. (IRNA)

Iran Ready to Help Solve Pakistan-India Dispute

MULTAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Morteza Sarmadi, has offered his country's help to resolve the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.

Morteza Sarmadi said Iran supports a negotiated settlement to the Kashmir issue taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Speaking at a press conference here Thursday, the deputy minister reiterated Iran's sympathy with the people in Kashmir and said Tehran would not support a solution which is not acceptable to the inhabitants.

Sarmadi said Iran's good relations and economic cooperation with India were not in any way against the interests of Pakistan.

"Establishing ties with India does not mean that we are opposing Pakistan," he said.

The deputy foreign minister visited Iran's Cultural Centre, which was target of an attack by gunmen on February 20, leaving an Iranian diplomat and six Pakistanis dead.

Sarmadi also held talks Pakistani officials in Islamabad during which security measures taken by the government were discussed. Police have arrested five suspects in the case and Sarmadi expressed satisfaction with the pace of the investigation. (AFP)

UN Chief Sends Condolence to President Rafsanjani

NEW YORK — The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sent on Thursday a condolence message to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on February 28 quake in the northwestern Iranian province of Ardebil.

The message reads: I was greatly saddened to learn of the devastation caused by recent earthquakes in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and of the widespread human suffering that has resulted.

It said the UN stood ready to assist Iranian government in any way possible, in the ongoing relief efforts.

Annan said that he had asked Mr. Yasushi Akashi, under-secretary- general for humanitarian affairs, to closely monitor the situation and to be ready to help serve as a channel for contributions resulting from the international appeal issued by the Iranian government.

He added that in that connection, he had been informed that the department for humanitarian affairs, together with UNDP, UNCHR, UNFPA, WHO and WFP, had already jointly pledged an initial assistance package worth $450,000.

Concluding the message, Annan condoled with the people and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and particularly with the families of the quake victims.

Meanwhile, Seyed Abdullah Bukhari, Imam (paryer leader) of Delhi Jama Masjid (Grand Mosque), today expressed his shock and grief at the great loss of life in the recent earthquake in Ardebil, Iran.

Bukhari said in his condolence message to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, a copy of which was released to IRNA, that he was shocked and deeply grieved to hear the news of unprecedented earthquake in Iran.

"The devastation and the great loss of life suffered by the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the source of tremendous sorrow for us, says the message.

"I share your excellency's sorrow and extend my deepest sympathies and condolences to your excellency and to all suffering and bereaved Iranian brothers", reads the message. (IRNA)



Swedish Security Council Calls MKO a Terrorist Organization

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Chief of Swedish Security Council calls the Mujahedin Khalgh Organization (MKO), known as "Munafeqin" or hypocrties as one of the 21st terrorist groups existing in Sweden.

Metro newspaper published in Stockholm quoted the Head of Swedish Security Council as saying on Thursday that there are groups in this country using Sweden as a base for overseas violent operations and a place to store their weapons.

The U.S. Secretary of State in 1991 had called MKO a terrorist group.

Conference on European Civilization, Islam Winds Up Work

PARIS — The Third International Seminar on European Civilization and Islam wound up on Thursday.

The two-day conference, which was sponsored by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the London-based Islamic Organization of 'Ammar', surveyed the root cause of European civilizations' development and Islam and mutual understanding between Europe and the world of Islam with a view to establishing favorable relations between Europe and the Muslim world.

Iran was represented at the conference by Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Hojatoleslam Mohammad-Ali Taskhiri, the Secretary of Women Solidarity Association, Faezeh Hashemi and the Chancellor of Allameh Tabatabaie University, Mohsen Khaliji.

Addressing the audience, Mrs. Hashemi said that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, women seriously contributed to various affairs at the highest executive posts, at universities and at Majlis to the effect that there is no restriction for their political and social activities.

She said that Iranian women's presence was outstanding and distinctive compared to women in contemporary societies for their massive and continued presence at international circles.

Yet Khaliji said that women constituted more than 45 percent of Iranian pupils and 34 percent of college students. (IRNA)

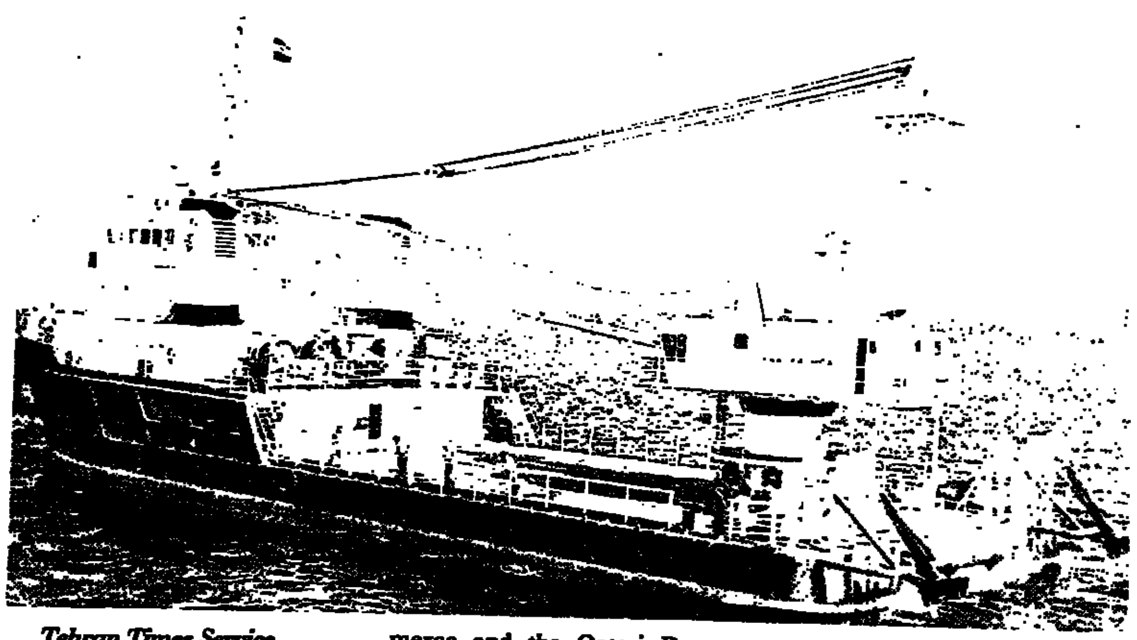
Iranian, Foreign Researchers Inspect Historical Monuments of Bushehr

BUSHEHR — A 21-member delegation, comprising researchers and historians from Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, France, the U.S., Austria and Iran have inspected historical monuments in this southern Iranian province over the past two days.

The areas mostly visited by the group were battlefields in the first world war, including town of Delvar and Zayer Khazarkhan Castle at Ahrom.

He said that he would compile several essays on struggles and life of Reisali Delvari and Zayer Khazarkhan after his trip. (IRNA)

Iran-Doha Shipping Line Launched



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - A shipping line between Iranian ports of Bushehr and Lengeh and Doha port in Qatar opened Wednesday.

Mohammad Nabi Habibi, Iran's Deputy Minister of Commerce and the Qatari Deputy Minister of Economics and Trade, Yusuf Hussein Kamal as well as some other officials of the two countries were present at a ceremony for launching of the line, IRNA said.

The express shipping line between Bushehr and Lengeh ports and the port of Doha was launched with the navigation of the passenger ship 'Berelian' (diamond). The vessel is purchased by Iran's Valfajr-8 Shipping Company.

Sanction Cost U.S. $790bn in Potential Exports

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - President Clinton's policy of using economic sanctions as a political tool has come under further fire from the American business community as a failed strategy that rebounds U.S. firms in terms of lost trade.

In a new report to the U.S. Congress, the National Association of Manufacturers estimated that 61 laws and executive actions to punish, isolate or change the behavior of 35 countries over the last four years, had cost the U.S. up to $790 billion in potential exports.

The effect had "yet to topple a targeted government" and the added problem was that once launched, sanctions were "extremely difficult to terminate," the report, quoted by the *Financial Times* found.

Particularly abhorred by the U.S. resorting increasingly to unilateral action was the use of "secondary boycott measures" such as those enacted last year against Cuba, Libya and Iran, which "clearly violate numerous international agreements," it said.

The National Association added that as a result foreign companies and governments were "understandably reluctant to enter into long-term commercial relationship with U.S. companies if the threat of sanctions looms.

Sanctions and export controls were said to have cost American firms the rice market in Iran, engine orders from the European Airbus and infrastructure energy projects in China.

Since 1993, the U.S. was listed to have a dopted 22 measures to promote human rights and democracy in 13 countries, Angola, Bosnia, Burma, Burundi, China, Croatia, Cuba, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Yugoslavia.

In addition, 14 laws or executive actions were imposed under the guise of combatting terrorism against Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Nicaragua, North Korea, Sudan and Syria.

The National Association recommended that proposed sanctions be subjected to specific criteria relating to effectiveness and should lapse, unless reauthorized by Congress, or be waived, if the president determines it is in the national interest to do so.

Its report is part of increasing efforts by the U.S. business community to convince American



leaders that sanctions are largely ineffective and counterproductive unless they have broad multilateral support from allies.

It follows the National Foreign Trade Council in Washington launching a campaign last month to counter the increasing use of trade sanctions by the Clinton administration as a political tool.

Economic sanctions are imposed by the U.S. against up to 50 percent of the world's population, often using the pretext of seeking policy changes or dealing with human rights against countries who are openly critical of U.S. behavior as a superpower.

The underlying fear of American companies is that such actions are not only damaging to trade relations but provoke hostility from U.S. allies and enemies alike.

712,000 Tons of Minerals Extracted Since March

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - A total of 712,194 tons of minerals, worth Rls.11.568 billion, have been quarried from provincial active mines since March 20, 1996.

Director of the provincial mines and metals of Shahre Kord, Abbas-Ali Iravani said on Thursday that the figure showed an increase of 32 and 12.6 percent in terms of weight and value respectively compared to the similar period last year, IRNA reported.

Iravani said the minerals, including dimensional stones, gypsum, fire clay and bauxite, were yielded by 44 mines.

He added that 200 tons of marmatite, worth $20,000, were also extracted within the said period.

In related news from Kerman, managing director of Golgohar Iron Ore Mining Complex in the city of Sirjan Mehdi Saqafi said on Thursday that a plan was underway to extend the mining complex which once operational would save $150 million for the country annually.

The plan aims to the increase the complex's production capacity to four million tons annually, he said.

The complex runs presently with a production capacity of two million tons a year.

The mining complex, set up at a cost of 300 million plus Rls. 200 billion in a five-year period between 1989 and 1994, includes six mines with a total reserves of 1,135,000,000 tons of iron ore.

Egypt, Iraq to Boost Industrial Cooperation

Tehran Times Serivce

TEHRAN - An industrial delegation from Iraq led by the chairman of the industrial union Adnan-el-Kudus is due to arrive in Cairo on March 15 on a week-long visit to Egypt to boost bilateral industrial cooperation.

Mahdouh Thabet Deputy Chairman of the Egyptian Industrial Union said the Iraqi delegation would discuss and follow up the industrial cooperation protocol signed between Baghdad and Cairo last May, the Egyptian press reported, as quoted by IRNA.

The Iraqi side has expressed its wish to import Egyptian products and primary materials used in food and medicine.

Egypt wants to establish a trade center in Baghdad and an Egyptian trade delegation is expected to visit Iraq later this month, Thabet said.

UK Donates Pnds.125,000 for Earthquake Victims

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The British government announced Thursday that it was donating Pnds.125,000 ($200,000) towards helping the victims of last week's devastating earthquake in the northwestern Iranian province of Ardebil.

The Overseas Development Agency (ODA) said that the money will go to the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs for providing food and supplies such as shelter and blankets, IRNA reported form London.

The aid donation follows Iran making a formal appeal to the international community for assistance to help cope with the bleak snow-bound conditions in the mountainous terrain, where the 20 villages have been destroyed and another 80 damaged up to 90 percent.

The death toll has risen to over 1,000, with more than 2,600 injured and 36,000 left homeless.

The ODA said on Wednesday that it was in contact with the UN coordinating agency in Geneva to assess requirements and would contribute when clarified.

LDP Mulls Law Requiring Farmers to Cut Rice Output

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - A Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) panel on the issue of rice production will consider drafting a law requiring farmers' cooperation with the government's rice production restraint policy, the group members said Thursday.

This was decided following statements by some farmers that they will no longer cooperate with government policy, the members said, as quoted by an IRNA-Kyodo-OANA dispatch.

Toshikatsu Matsuoka, leader of the LDP's Agriculture and Forestry Division, said, "if the number of such farmers increases, the situation will get out of control and will trouble both agricultural producers and consumers."

If such a law is enacted, it will contradict the spirit of the nation's food law which took effect November 1995 and basically guarantees the freedom in farm production, agriculture observers say.

Such a measure will also spur strong opposition from farmers, they added.

Japan has been implementing a policy of reducing the acreage of rice under cultivation in order to control the balance of rice supply and demand.

Recently, however, farmers in Kochi prefecture and the town of Towa in Iwate prefecture announced that they will not comply with the government's policy. In doing so, they will lose government subsidies for cutting rice acreage, but expect income from rice production to offset losses.

The Japanese Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry has maintained that it will continue to ask for farmers' cooperation with the existing regulations.

Trust Banks May Link Up With Postal Savings

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Trust banks may seek to link up with a large network of Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) for postal savings in the future, the head of the Trust Companies Association of Japan said Thursday.

"Theoretically, it is possible for us to use the powerful postal savings' network," Shozo Endo, who is also president of Chuo Trust and Banking Co., told a regular news conference, as quoted by an IRNA-Kyodo-OANA dispatch.

But he ruled out the possibility of an immediate linkup of their ATM network and that for postal savings, saying, "we are not considering that scenario for the present."

Japan to Offer Iran $150,000 in Emergency Aid

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Japan is soon to provide Iran with $150,000 as an emergency aid to survivers of recent earthquake in northwestern province of Ardebil.

Japanese Foreign Ministry announced in Tokyo on Friday that Japan would soon rush 30 million yens worth of tents and blankets to the Iranian province, IRNA reported.

Scores of relief and trade companies had earlier referred to the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo, calling for expedition of relief teams to the quake-torn areas.

An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the richter scale jolted Ardbil last Friday, February 28, 1977, killing 965 and injuring hundreds of others.

Meanwhile, relief assistance from various countries continue to arrive for the quake victims.

The Turkish Red Crescent Society sent a truck carrying 100 tents, 3,500 blankets, 75,000 syrings and large amount of medical equipment.

Oman sent two plane-loads of relief supplies to the quake victims.

Saudi Arabia announced that it has sent a plane-load of medical and relief supplies to Ardebil.

Tunisia and Jordan as well as several neighboring countries are to dispatch relief aid to the quake victims.

Three relief organizations in Japan have announced readiness to send relief supplies to the quake-victims of Ardebil.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

The following table shows the foreign exchange rates in rials as released by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday, March 6,1997.

COUNTRY	UNIT	Floating BUY	Rates SELL	Export BUY	Rates SELL
Australia	dollar	1,376	1,384	2,363	2,375
Austria	schilling	146	147	250	252
Belgium	(100) francs	4,950	4,978	8,497	8,540
Canada	dollar	1,277	1,285	2,193	2,204
Denmark	krone	267	269	460	462
France	franc	302	304	519	522
Germany	mark	1,020	1,026	1,751	1,760
Holland	guilder	907	912	1,557	1,565
Italy	(100) liras	102	103	176	177
Japan	(100) yen	1,434	1,442	2,461	2,473
Sweden	krone	229	231	394	396
UAE	dirham	476	479	818	820
UK	pound	2,816	2,832	4,834	4,859
U.S.	dollar	1,750	1,755	3,000	3,015



SPORTS SUMMARY

Tehran Times Service

SOCCER

PSG's Nightmare Continues

PARIS - Paris St Germain, riding high just a few weeks ago, were jeered off the pitch by frustrated fans after being held to a disappointing 0-0 draw by Greek opponents Aek Athens in the home-leg of their European Cup winners cup quarter-final Thursday.

The French Trophy holders, who have been struggling badly ever since being humiliated in the European Super Cup by Juventus last month, had been hoping to make up for their shock elimination from the French Cup at the hands of a fourth division side last weekend. But they had little to offer against Aek. Poor finishing and some fine goalkeeping by the visitors' Ilias Atmatzidis, left PSG a mountain to climb in Athens in two weeks time.

In thursday's other games Fiorentina, Liverpool and Barcelona all had the edge after their first-leg showdowns. Fiorentina scored a 2-0 victory over benfica, liverpool came away with a 1-1 draw against Brann in Norway and Barcelona recovered from an early shock to beat visiting Aik Solna of Sweden 3-1.

Celtic Wreck Rangers Hopes

GLASGOW: Celtic ended rangers hopes with a 2-0 quarter-final Scottish Cup victory here Thursday -- their first win over their arch-rivals in nine matches. A Malky Mackay header and a Paolo Di Canio penalty in the first 18 minutes sealed the match. Celtic's triumph will boost the side's hopes of a first league and cup 'double' since 1988. With the premier division Derby to come on March 16 back at Parkhead. Rangers, who are chasing their ninth successive league crown, currently lead Celtic by five points in the title race.

'Match-Fix' Footballers Face New Trial

LONDON: The three footballers accused of match-fixing are to be retried. The first trial of Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers along with London-based Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim ended when a verdict was not reached on Tuesday. The original trial, which lasted seven weeks, followed a year-long investigation by British police into an alleged betting syndicate based in East Asia.

The prosecution claimed lim was its representative in Britain. Former Liverpool goalkeeper Grobbelaar, 39, ex-Wimbledon striker John Fashanu, 34, ex-Wimbledon keeper Hans Segers, 35, and Lim, 31, denied conspiring to give and accept corrupt payments.

United Want Ferguson Next Century

MANCHESTER, England: Manchester United chief Martin Edwards has said he wants alex ferguson to lead the club well into the next century. He made the statement after hailing the club's 4-0 demolition of Porto in the European champions cup as one of their greatest triumphs.

TENNIS

Seeds Safely Through

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands: Top-seed Goran Ivanisevic, Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek and fourth-seeded Thomas Enqvist came safely through their second-round matches in the $750,000 ATP tournament here Thursday. Ivanisevic, winner at Milan last weekend, defeated French Davis Cup player Guillaume Raoux 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 while Krajicek, who is seeded to play him in Sunday's final beat German David Prinosil 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/5).

Moya and Woodruff Win

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona: Third-seed Carlos Moya of Spain recovered after a slow start to beat Norway's Christian Ruud 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/1) in the second-round of the $303,000 ATP tournament here on Thursday.

BOXING

Sugar Ray Leonard Wants to Fight Again

LOS ANGELES: Sugar Ray Leonard's latest retirement from the ring lasted just five days. Leonard, who said he was finished with boxing after being stopped in the fifth round by Hector "Macho" Camacho last weekend changed his mind on Thursday.

GOLF

Little-Known Australian Sets the Pace

AGADIR, Morocco: Australian rookie Stephen Allen carded a five-under-par 67 here on Thursday to lead by one stroke after the first round of the Moroccan open. Allan, in his first year as a professional, played steadily with six birdies and only one bogey on his card to finish one shot clear of American Bob May, South Africa's Clinton Whitelaw and Scotland's Andrew Coltart, who all scored 68s.

SKIING

Wiberg Can Only Wait

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN, CA: Pernilla Wiberg will have to wait at least one more day for her chance to clinch the women's world cup overall crown after high winds postponed the super-giant slalom here until Friday. International Ski Federation officials were still hoping to stage both the super-G and a slalom on Friday. They are the last two races before the World Cup finals in Vail, Colorado, March 12-16.

CRICKET

Lara and Hooper Thwart Indians

KINGSTON, Jamaica: A century fourth-wicket stand between Brian Lara and Carl Hooper lifted West Indies to a formidable 300 for four against India on the first day of the first test at Sabina Park here Thursday. Lara (83) and hooper (87 not out) shared a 147-run partnership.

South Korea Defeated Iran 3-1 in Soccer

Theran Times Service

Tehran -- South Korea's Poohang playing in the Asian Soccer Clubs Cup semi-finals in Malaysia yesterday swept to a 3-1 victory over Iran's Piroozi.

Park Tae Ha scored the first goal during the 9th minute and SaeOh Hyun Woon added a second goal in the 55th minute while the former scored a third goal in the 84th minute, IRNA reported yesterday.

Iraq is scheduled to play South Korea's Hoi Chun Ma in a match the winner of which is expected to play against Piroozi. The winner will earn the third title.

Alpine Skiing Super-G Leaves Wiberg in Limbo

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN, California -- High winds forced a four-and-a-half hour delay to the women's world cup super-giant slalom here Thursday, leaving Pernilla Wiberg still with one hand on the coveted overall trophy.

International Ski Federation (FIS) officials were hopeful of completing the penultimate super-G of the season, despite winds gusting up to 50 km/h on the 2,012m Mammoth Mountain course.

Wiberg, with 1,555 points, was poised to claim the overall title, needing only to finish ahead of 1996 overall winner Katja Seizinger of Germany, her nearest rival with 1,004 points.

Thursday's super-G and the slalom scheduled for Friday were the last two races before the World Cup finals in Vail, Colorado, March 12-16. In the event that either race is cancelled and not re-scheduled, Wiberg would automatically claim the overall crown. She also entered the Mammoth races leading the slalom and super-giant slalom standings. The 26-year-old Swede said her success this season was due to intense training during the summer.

Australian Grand Prix Practice Times

MELBOURNE, Australia -- Times after practice for Sunday's season-opening Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park here Friday.

1. Michael Schumacher (Ger) Ferrari one minute 32. 496 seconds (average speed 206.357 kmh/128.227mph).
2. Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Ger) Williams Renault 1:32. 910.
3. Jean Alesi (Fra) Benetton Renault 1:33.255.
4. Jacques villeneuve (Can) Williams Renault 1:33. 371.
5. Ralf Schumacher (Ger) Jordan Peugeot 1:33. 437.
6. Eddie Irvine (GBr) Ferrari 1:34. 157,
7. Gerhard Berger (Aut) Benetton Renault 1:34. 271 (AFP)



GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany: FC Schalke 04's Olaf Thon (L) tries score past FC Valencia's Romero during their EFA Cup quarter final match here. Schalke won 2-0.

(AFP PHOTO)

Football Fiorentina Are on Their Way

LISBON -- Fiorentina took a giant step towards a place in the European Cup winners cup semi-finals here on Thursday night, when they swept to a 2-0 victory over Benfica.

Francesco Baiano scored just before half-time and skipper Gabriel Batistuta added a second goal in the final minute to put Fiorentina firmly in control of the quarter-final, second-leg showdown.

Just 24 hours after FC Porto were humiliated by Manchester United in the champions league, Portugal's other great European hope now have a mountain to climb in Florence in two weeks' time.

The Italians had most of the possession and deserved the result for never letting up their search for another goal in the second-half.

(AFP)

Formula One Australian Grand Prix Faces Strike Chaos



MELBOURNE, Australia -- A crippling public transport strike is expected to throw this weekend's Australian Grand Prix into chaos after talks Friday failed to settle a pay dispute.

Victorian State Premier Jeff Kennett described the strike as "an act of treachery and betrayal" by the union which he said would severely damage Australia's international reputation.

Prime Minister John Howard said: "It's been a long time since I've seen anything as stupid or as bloody-minded in Australia as what the trade unions in Victoria are doing at the moment. "

(AFP)

Soccer: Munich, City of United Tragedy, Now Beckons Dreamers

MANCHESTER - Manchester United's dream of becoming European champions could become a reality in Munich on May 28, the city which witnessed the greatest tragedy in the club's history.

On February 6, 1958 the plane carrying the United party back from a European Cup match in Belgrade, crashed on takeoff after refuelling in Munich and 23 people were killed -- including eight members of the Busby Babes, as Matt Busby's young talented side were known.

Now, following United's overwhelming 4-0 victory against Porto in the first leg of their European Cup quarter-final on Wednesday night, United have been installed as second favorites behind Juventus to reach this year's final, which is being staged in Munich.

(Reuter)

Olympic Short-List for 2004

Lausanne -- the international Olympic committee named Athens, Rome, Stockholm, Buenos Aires and cape town on a short-list for the 2004 games here on Friday.

A final decision will be taken on September 5. Istanbul, Lille, Rio DE Janeiro, San Juan, Seville and st Petersburg lost out.

A panel of 14, three of whom are not IOC members, had given each of the 11 candidates a 40-minute hearing on Thursday. They also had in front of them a 350 page report assessing the strengths and weakness of each candidate drawn up by former Olympic fencer Thomas Bach of Germany.

International Olympic Committee president Juan-Antonio Samaranch had been forced to defend the bidding process after mounting complaints from the candidates.

"We want to keep costs down," he said. "There is always a winner and a loser. You have to accept it."

Athens, Rome, Buenos Aires and Stockholm probably scored more points for projects which were seen in Bach's report as "well-conceived", "well-located" and "very precise".

Cape town, which suffers from what was seen as a high crime rate and the perception that south Africans feel 2004 is too early for the country, was a surprise addition to an enlarged five-city short-list.

Many observers expected only four bids to battle it out for the games.

Bach's report on Istanbul had bristled with "more details required."

Lille is another city which failed to convince while Rio suffered from its massive social problems.

(AFP)

Japanese Team, Champion of 10-Day-Dawn Table Tennis Events

ISFAHAN -- Japanese team won the title of the 10-day-dawn table tennis contests which ended here Wednesday.

China, Russia, Pakistan, Armenia, Japan and two Iranian teams attended the contests which started here Saturday.

Fajr, an Iranian team, stood second followed by Russia.

(IRNA)

Soccer Stars Face Retrial in Britain

LONDON -- Former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar and three co-defendants will be retried on charges that they fixed top-level soccer matches, Britain's Crown Prosecution Service said on Thursday.

(Reuters)

Israeli Withdrawal Announcement "a Game of Deceit"

BAIT-UL-MOQADDAS — The Israeli Cabinet approved plans overnight, after seven hours of arduous debate, to withdraw troops from an additional nine percent of the West Bank as part of self-rule agreements with the Palestinians, officials said.

Netanyahu's pullback plan was approved by 10 votes to seven over the strong objections of right-wing hardliners who oppose handing over more land and have repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the governing coalition over the issue.

The withdrawal would nonetheless maintain Israeli control of all West Bank roads and land around settlements and would not link up the isolated self-rule towns into large blocs of Palestinian Autonomy, Israeli public radio said.

The pullback, expected to implement in the next 48 hours, drew swift condemnation from Palestinian officials, who described it as insufficient and deceitful.

Saeb Erakat, a leading Palestinian peace negotiator, said the Israeli announcement was "a game of deceit," because all but two percent of the territory concerned was already under Palestinian civilian control.

"Geographically speaking, the actually transfer of land is only two percent," he told AFP. "They are trying to deceive the world by saying it's nine percent."

"Israel is trying to impose its own kind of peace, this is not the peace we agreed upon," he said.

Netanyahu had previously stated that he would only turn over two percent of additional land to the Palestinians in a first phase to be completed by Friday under an accord signed in January.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

YAQUBI...

gional countries, but some of the regional countries or the PGCC as a collection, have taken the most unfavorable stands against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Iranian ambassador to Muscat said, adding that Iran's willingness to make friendship with these countries stems from its brotherhood feeling and nothing else. A country which has thwarted the plots of the big powers is capable of defending itself against any other country.

Yaqubi said that the strategic mistake of certain regional countries has its roots in their misjudgment to the Islamic Revolution and the biased propaganda launched by the global arrogance to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Certainly, their great mistake was the help and support they rendered to the Iraqi regime during the (1980-88) Iraqi war against Iran. They themselves created a terrible monster for control of which they were forced to pay $200 billion to the big powers, he said, adding the story has not yet come to an end and the political, social and economic repercussions of the great blunder will continue in times to come.

However it seems that the regional countries are coming to their senses, he said adding that foresight and realism are becoming a salient feature of regional politics.

Until very recently Tehran had either no relations with the regional countries or it had a low-level relations with them. But today Iran's relations with its neighbors are at the highest level and it is boosting its multilateral economic and cultural relations.

On the reasons for the PGCC insistence to issue biased statements and take hostile stands against the Islamic Republic of Iran, Yaqubi stressed that unfortunately, the PGCC is the only organization in the world which issues biased statements against other countries, sowing discord in the region instead of trying to boost political, economic and social relations with the whole world, especially with the neighboring countries.

As a matter of fact only one or two members of the council, in cooperation with certain outsiders, force the council to take such positions. According to the council's charter every member state has the authority to incorporate the political issues of its interest in the concluding declaration and other countries can only soften the language of the statement.

The issue of Iranian islands is one of the issues which is incorporated in the council's statements under the pressure of a regional country and influence of certain foreign countries despite the fact that all the regional countries maintain that overplaying of the issue will not be to the benefit of the region and its future.

Elaborating on the recent meeting with Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, and the latest developments in Tehran-Muscat relations, Yaqubi noted that the two countries officials are for promoting the climate of mutual understanding and security in the region. To create an atmosphere of mutual understanding in the region, the two countries' officials have exchanged views on various issues and they share common views over cooperation and security in the region.

Omanese Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Fahd Bin Taymour said, in an interview recently published in Japan, reiterated the stance of Oman and the need for participation of all regional countries in the security arrangement of the region, he said.

Yaqubi went on to say that the exchange of views between the two countries' officials will be to the benefit of the region as a whole.

As for the latest developments in the two countries relations, he said that Iran-Oman Joint Economic Commission was convened in Muscat last month and reached important agreements.

Setting up of Iran's Trade Center in Muscat, providing visa facilities for Iranian businessmen and freedom of navigation of Iranian boats, direct contact of the residents of the two countries border provinces of Hormozgan of Iran with Musandan of Oman and cooperation in extraction of copper and oil were among other agreements reached between the two countries.

According to a memorandum of understanding signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and Oman's Information Ministry the two countries will directly exchange news, films and reports for the first time in the history of the region. This is considered as the first step towards media cooperation between Iran and one of its neighbors in the Persian Gulf.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran, Majlis Speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri and IRIB's Head, Ali Larijani to visit Muscat are expected to visit Oman on the invitation of their Omani counterparts. The Omanese Defense Minister is also to visit Iran at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Forouzandeh.

On the recent allegations launched by the U.S. against Iran and its warnings to the Persian Gulf Littoral Arab States, Yaqubi said he maintains that despite the biased propaganda of the U.S. relations between Iran and these countries are growing compared to a few months ago.

He said that the exchange of visits between the officials of Iran and these countries point up the fact that the relations are on growing trend. Moreover, the exchange of messages between senior officials of all of these countries and Iranian officials underlines the growth of this trend. Only Bahrain lags behind but given the recent remarks of the Bahraini Emir, it is expected that we witness certain level of improvement in bilateral relations.

Asked to comment on the contents of these messages, he said that the messages concerned peace, friendship and regional security. Indeed Iran and its Arab neighbors share a house, i.e., the Persian Gulf and all residents of the house will benefit the development of the region, he said, adding, the enemies try to sow discord among them and fish in the troubled water.

U.S. Ambassador Threatens to Punch Right-Wing Israeli MP

TEL AVIV — U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk threatened to punch a right-wing member of Israel's Parliament who called him a "Kike" because of his support for peace agreements with the Palestinians, U.S. officials said Friday.

The undiplomatic exchange occurred Thursday during a ceremony in memory of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Indyk took legislator Rehavam Zeevi aside to complain over remarks last month in which the Israeli called the American envoy a "Kike," a pejorative term for Jew.

The Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonoth* reported the following exchange between the two men which was confirmed by a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv:

Indyk: "The last time somebody called me a Kike was when I was 15 years old and I punched him in the face."

Zeevi: "Well, try it, you Kike."

Indyk: "You're a disgrace to your people."

Zeevi: "You're a son of a bitch."

The *Yediot Aharonoth* reported that Indyk froze under the insult and that other members of Parliament intervened to end the standoff.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

SUDAN...

view with the *Tehran Times*, Tabatabaei underlined that the idea of holding talks at the ministerial level was initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tabatabaei, who is also Iran's ambassador to Kenya, further elaborated on the Tehran-Nairobi relations saying that President Rafsanjani's trip there last September opened a new chapter for upgrading bilateral ties between both countries.

He further said that significant measures have been taken by both countries to implement the provisions of the memorandum of understanding signed in Nairobi during President Rafsanjani's visit there last year.

Tabatabaei revealed that the Iran-Kenya Joint Economic Commission is slated to open in Tehran anytime within the next six months and that he expects it to further expand bilateral relations particularly in the fields of tourism, oil, gas, agriculture, fishing, dam construction, shipping and road building.

Elsewhere, he termed the establishment of the Tehran-Nairobi air link as a positive step which would increase commercial relations between both countries by facilitating the transport of goods.

Tabatabaei also revealed that cultural exchanges between the two countries will receive a boost when the Islamic Azad University opens two branches in Nairobi and Mombasa in the near future.

Touching on inter-parliamentary relations, Tabatabaei said that there are plans to set up an Iran-Kenya parliamentary friendship association in the capitals of both countries in the near future.

He said the association would work at finding legal avenues to bring the parliaments of both countries closer.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

THOUSANDS...

be stopped," warned Faisal Husseini, the top Palestinian Authority official in Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

The rally was organized by Yasser Arafat's government and was seen as a veiled warning to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Palestinians could be mobilized for at any time should Israel not live up to promises made in the peace accords.

The Security Council concluded a two-day debate on Thursday during which virtually all the approximately 50 speakers criticized Israel's decision to build a new Jewish neighborhood in largely Arab East Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

Private consultations were taking place on a resolution proposed by the council's European Union members – Britain, France, Portugal and Sweden – but it was uncertain when a vote might take place.

The draft would call on Israel to refrain from all actions or measures ... which alter the facts on the ground, pre-empt the final status negotiations (between Israel and the Palestinians), and have negative implications for the Middle East peace process.

It would also call on Israel to abide scrupulously by its obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention, which bars settlements in occupied territories, and would urge all parties to press ahead with the peace process.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

FMI...

people to actively take part in the presidential elections, adding that the FMI has nominated its candidate as a gesture of honoring its commitment before the nation.

Yazdi will offer his action plan in political, economic and administrative areas soon, the FMI said.

Meanwhile, Minister of the Interior Ali Mohammad Besharati said that the Guardians Council has approved to hold the presidential elections on May 23. He said that registration of the candidates would start from April 21.

Majlis speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri, former Minister of Culture and the Islamic Guidance Mohammad Khatami, Deputy Head of the Judiciary Seyed Reza Zavarei, Secretary-General of the Association for Defending the Values of the Islamic Revolution Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri, former member of Parliament Saeed Rejaei Khorasani, Secretary-General of the National Union of the Islamic Associations of the Students Heshmatollah Tabarzadi and Ezzatollah Sahabi have announced their candidacy to run for president.

The FMI has so far failed to obtain license for its political activities.

The political parties are required to obtain license from a special committee.

(IRNA)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

VELAYATI...

Velayati's letter was submitted to the secretary general on Thursday by the Iranian Representative to the United Nations' Headquarters in New York Majid Takht Ravanchi.

The decision is to institutionalize the policy of occupation of a nation's territory, said Velayati in his letter, adding that it is also another proof of the aggressive intention of the Zionist regime in continuation and entrenchment of its expansionist policies in the region in clear violation of the United Nations Charter, principles of the international law and other international regulations.

Velayati also said that the events in recent years such as the Al-Khalil massacre, frequent military incursions into southern Lebanon and killing the oppressed people of that country, especially in Qana massacre, are all examples of the widespread violations of the human rights by Israel.

Opening an entrance to a tunnel located in the close vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the recent decision to expand Jewish settlements are evidence of the Israeli regime's total disregard for rules of international law, he said.

Velayati also reiterated the consistent policy of Islamic Iran on condemning all forms of occupation and aggression and reminded that any attempt to change the geographic, demographic and historical status of Palestine, and the holy city of Al-Qods in particular, would seriously threaten the restoration of genuine peace and stability in the region.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been of the view that the realization of a genuine peace in Palestine lies in restoration of all rights of the people of Palestine on the basis of justice, including the return of all Palestinian refugees to their own land and the liberation of all occupied territories", he concluded.

(IRNA)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

YELTSIN...

"In unifying our efforts, the two states will actively try in the future to bring about a global security system in Europe which fairly takes into account the interests of all members of the European family of peoples," it said.

The statement came ahead of a visit to Moscow by NATO Secretary General Javier Solana on Sunday.

Russia opposes NATO's plans to give membership to several East European countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are believed to be the main contenders and it is trying to negotiate a guarantee from the military alliance that its security will not be put under threat.

Yeltsin and Lukashenko did not discuss details of plans to speed up the process of integration between their two countries, said Yeltsin foreign affairs adviser Dmitri Ryurikov.

The governments in Minsk and Moscow will prepare a "political document on the main direction of the integration process" for the presidents' next meeting on April 2, Ryurikov said.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 5)

EUROPE ....

inability to stimulate growth," he says.

While the United States was able to boost jobs through expansionist policies, Europe has been stuck with tight budgets, and until recently strong currencies and high interest rates.

Hope for Growth After Monetary Union

The hope is that after monetary union, Europe will be in a stronger position to follow policies that boost growth, while also gaining from exchange rate stability inside the bloc.

Growth would in turn give countries more room for manoeuvre to consider cutting working hours, and lift from labor forces the terror of unemployment that currently paralyses them, when discussing any form of job flexibility.

But growth alone may not be enough. Some say a change in thinking is also necessary.

Francois complains that unlike in the United States, people in France still look down on people who are between jobs, while a deep attachment to hierarchies makes it difficult to switch from one position to a more junior one.

"It is unacceptable to hire you at a level below the one you were at. I would have been ready to work for half my previous salary," he said.

But psychological change will take time.

"The difference between the United States and Europe is that we are old cultures. We need lots of time to adapt," said Bank of France board member Paul Marchelli.

(Reuter)

India and Pakista... Talks on M...

...Says NATO Expans... High Price

China ... Slams

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India and Pakistan to Resume Talks on March 28

NEW DELHI, India — Three years after talks broke down over a territorial dispute, India and Pakistan are to resume negotiations March 28, officials said.

The talks, in New Delhi between Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider and his Pakistani counterpart Shamshad Ahmad, will last until March 31, a Foreign Office statement in New Delhi said on Thursday.

Haider and Ahmad, each the top civil servant in their countries' foreign ministries, will try to clear the way for meetings between policy-makers — first foreign ministers, and then, if negotiations go well, prime ministers.

Relations have been tense since negotiations broke down in January, 1994.

The two countries, capable of making nuclear weapons, have fought three wars since they became independent in 1947, two of them over Kashmir, a territory now divided between them. Border skirmishes over Kashmir continue.

Both sides agree that improving relations hinges on a settlement of the Kashmir territorial dispute, but neither has so far demonstrated a desire to compromise.

Earlier this week, India's defense minister told Parliament he was prepared "to make any sacrifice" to take over Pakistan's share of Kashmir.

Pakistan wants the people in India's part of Kashmir to be allowed to vote on whether to remain under New Delhi's control.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training separatist rebels in Indian Kashmir, the only predominately Muslim state in largely Hindu India. Pakistan, a Muslim state, says it only gives diplomatic support to the Kashmiri separatists.

"Peace is our main objective. We do not want any confrontation with our neighbors," Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda told Parliament on Thursday. "We hope the official level talks will yield positive results."

Since Nawaz Sharif's election as Pakistan's prime minister last month, New Delhi and Islamabad have exchanged letters on resuming talks.

Pakistan has insisted that the two sides discuss Kashmir. India prefers to consider less contentious issues first to help improve the climate before taking on Kashmir. (AP)

Yemeni Socialist Party to Boycott April Elections

SAN'A, Yemen — Yemen's Socialist Party, which for years ruled the south of the country, has decided to boycott the Parliament elections set for April, party officials said Thursday.

The party's Central Committee reached the decision at a meeting Wednesday night after weeks of discussion. The move had been recommended by the party's secretary-general, Ali Saleh Abbad, who is widely known as Muqbil.

Fifty-seven members of the committee supported the boycott, 32 opposed and one member abstained, party officials said. (AP)

Hong Kong to Send More Deputies to China Congress

BEIJING — Hong Kong will send eight more delegates to China's Parliament next year, the official Xinhua news agency said on Thursday.

It said the territory, which reverts from British to Chinese rule on July 1, will be entitled to send 36 deputies to the National People's Congress next year compared with 28 now.

Based on its population of 6.31 million people, Hong Kong would normally be entitled to 29 delegates, but it will be given additional seats due to its designation as a Special Administrative Region (SAR).

Given the special status of the SAR, an extra seven is added, making the total number of deputies 36, Xinhua quoted Cao Zhi, a senior member of Parliament, as saying.

An election committee under the supervision of senior MPs would be set up to select Hong Kong deputies for the next session of the Congress by the end of January 1998, Cao said.

China's Parliament has nearly 3,000 members. The body has little real power and its main role is to endorse policies drafted by communist rulers.

Beijing, which has pledged to allow Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy for 50 years after the transfer of power, has said it will scrap the territory's own elected legislature and replace it with an appointed provisional body. (Reuter)

Yeltsin Says NATO Expansion Plans Carry High Price

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin, making his annual address to Parliament on Thursday, said NATO's plans to expand eastwards were an attempt to squeeze Russia out of Europe and said the continent would pay a heavy price for them.

We are against NATO's plans for eastward expansion. Their realization will deliver a direct blow to our security. Behind them is the aspiration to squeeze Russia out of Europe and to leave it politically isolated, Yeltsin said.

Nato expansion can become a fateful decision which will cost the peoples of Europe very dear, he added.

Yeltsin, who delivered his keynote address in a clear, determined voice, said building a security system in Europe without Russia was doomed to failure. We shall do everything not to allow a new division of Europe, he said.

We must bequeath to those who come after us a secure world based on trust, Yeltsin said.

Russia has consistently opposed NATO's plans to admit former Warsaw Pact members, saying they will create new dividing lines in post-Cold War Europe.

The Atlantic alliance is expected to invite the first new members to join — probably Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — during a summit in Madrid in July.

Nato says expansion is not aimed against Russia and is trying to conclude an accord mapping out future relations with Moscow.

In his speech, Yeltsin said he was pinning great hopes on his summit meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Helsinki set for March 20 to 21, which is expected to focus on the issue of NATO enlargement.

Yeltsin's state of the nation address was aimed largely at reasserting the president's authority and showing that he is firmly back in control after a long absence from the Kremlin due to heart problems and pneumonia.

His tough comments on NATO struck a chord among parliamentarians, who include many communists and nationalists.

There is a rare degree of consensus among Russian politicians on the issue of the alliance's expansion.

Partly in response to NATO's plans, Yeltsin also called in his speech for more integration among the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which replaced the Soviet Union, especially between Russia and Belarus.

This year will be a year of great new decisions for Russia and Belarus, he said.

Last April the two Slavic neighbors launched a community and Yeltsin hosts Belorussian President Alexander Lukashenko on Friday to discuss further integration steps.

Moscow would certainly call the shots in any union with Belarus, a fact which is likely to cause anxiety in would-be NATO member Poland as well as in the Baltic states to the north of Belarus. It is not clear how NATO would react.

Yeltsin told a visiting European Union delegation on Monday the EU should take a more constructive approach to Belarus and said Russian-Belorussian integration had a lot further to go.

Lukashenko, who once branded NATO a monster, called on Tuesday for a Belarus-NATO treaty, echoing Russia's approach. (Reuter)

Japanese Envoy Confers With Assad on Red Army

DAMASCUS — A Japanese envoy discussed the fate of five suspected members of the Japanese Red Army held in Lebanon with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, officials said on Thursday.

Assad's spokesman Joubran Kourieh said Hiroshi Hirabayashi, chief foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, delivered an unspecified message from the Japanese leader during the Wednesday night meeting.

The Japanese envoy told reporters after talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara earlier on Wednesday that he presented ideas about the Red Army suspects. He said Japan would wait to see what judicial measures the Lebanese government took.

Syria is the main foreign power broker in Lebanon where it has some 35,000 troops. The five Red Army suspects —plus three other Japanese expected to be freed on Thursday — were arrested last month in Lebanon.

Judicial sources in Beirut said on Wednesday Lebanon would charge the five suspects on Thursday with passport forgery and other offences that carry sentences of up to three years in jail.

Diplomats said the forgery trial was a compromise formula to avoid their immediate extradition to Japan. The Red Army, founded in 1971, is allied to anti-Israeli Palestinian factions.

The five alleged guerrillas were identified as Kazua Tohira, 44, Haruo Wako, 48, Mariko Yamamoto, 56, Masao Adachi, 57 and 49-year-old Kozo Okamoto.

A Japanese Embassy spokesman said Hirabayashi would return to Tokyo from Syria on Friday. He did not say if the envoy would meet other Syrian officials.

The detention of the Red Army suspects had been mired with confusion since Hashimoto said in Tokyo on February 18 that members of the group where arrested in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa valley. Lebanese sources at first confirmed the arrest but later said they were not holding any Japanese.

On Monday Japan indicated it no longer expected to get the Red Army suspects immediately but hoped for extradition after Lebanese justice runs its course. Japan and Lebanon do not have an extradition agreement.

Kourieh said Hirabayashi also conveyed an invitation for Assad to visit Japan at a date to be decided later, which the Syrian leader accepted. (Reuter)

China Welcomes Gore but Slams U.S. Rights Abuse

BEIJING — China on Thursday said it hoped U.S. Vice President Al Gore's forthcoming visit would boost ties but it also took a swipe at what it called widespread human rights abuses in the United States.

Gore was expected to visit Beijing later this month and exchange views with Chinese officials on the environment and energy, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang told a news briefing.

We hope this visit could open broader prospects for the improvement and development of Sino-U.S. relations as well as trade and economic cooperation, tang said.

We hope this visit could achieve success, he said without giving further details of the trip.

Sino-U.S. relations have improved gradually in recent months after plunging over Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui's private, landmark trip to the United States in June 1995.

China considers Taiwan a rebel province and has sought to push the island into diplomatic isolation.

China and the United States have been painstakingly restoring their damaged ties, and the Gore trip is part of a series of senior level meetings expected to culminate with an exchange of presidential visits.

But Tang, in keeping with Beijing's carrot-and-stick strategy, hit out at some Western states for turning a blind eye to their own human rights shortcomings while condemning China's record.

It is an objective fact that human rights violations exist on a wide-scale in the United States, Tang said, adding that the failings of the West included racial discrimination, xenophobia, ethnic strife and social injustice.

He said that criticism of China was not about human rights but about imposing values on other countries.

It is not really caring about human rights problems but using human rights as an excuse to apply political pressure and force their values and social system on other countries.

The wide gap in views on human rights has led to considerable tension between the two nations, particularly in the years since China called in the army to crush pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

In its annual report on human rights, the U.S. State Department accused Beijing of effectively silencing public dissent in 1996 through jailings, intimidation or exile.

China considers dissidents like Wei Jingsheng, dubbed the 'father of China's Modern Democracy Movement' and a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, as common criminals.

China's propaganda machine has joined the anti-U.S. chorus.

The official *China Daily* on Thursday lashed out at the *New York Times* for waging a verbal war on China.

Its constant diatribe is both tiresome and dangerous, the newspaper said. Tiresome because it goes on relentlessly, day after day. Dangerous because it misleads readers and damages Sino-U.S. relations.

In the eyes of the *New York Times*, China is an enemy, or at least a potential enemy, it said.

Why does the *New York Times* hate China? Because China is an emerging power. China pursues an independent foreign policy and refuses to dance to the tune called by the United States.

In a lengthy report on Tuesday, the official Xinhua news agency described the United States as a land of guns, terrorist bomb attacks and racial discrimination. (Reuter)



Bait-ul-Moqaddas (Feb. 26): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shows on a map of Bait-ul-Moqaddas the place of the Har Homa neighborhood in Bait-ul-Moqaddas office. Netanyahu announced after a ministerial meeting that the government had given the green light to building the first 2,500 homes for Jews in the Har Homa, the 11th Jewish suburb of east Bait-ul-Moqaddas, despite Palestinian threats of a violent backlash if the project went ahead.

(AFP PHOTO)

Goldminer Fails to End It All — Three Times

ALMATY — A goldminer in Kazakhstan's industrial city of Balkhash failed in three attempts to kill himself in less than a week, a newspaper said.

Boris Golovko, 44, first slashed his wrists and then tried to stab himself last week but did not achieve the desired result, the weekly Karavan said.

He was rushed to hospital by concerned neighbors and there, after medical treatment, recovered sufficiently to manage to jump out of his ward's eighth floor window.

But the potentially fatal jump was cushioned by a snow drift. (Reuter)

Albanian Protestors Ignore Cease-Fire, Refuse to Surrender Arms

TIRANA – Armed protestors in southern Albania rejected a 48-hour government cease-fire and amnesty plan, vowing to hold onto their weapons, as an EU delegation arrived in the capital to press for dialogue.

Mobs were said to be controlling a 120-kilometer (75-miles) stretch of the coastal road between two key southern hotspots, the Port of Vlore and the Adriatic beach resort of Sarande, near the Greek border.

Two people, a mother and a son, were shot dead in the last 24 hours in Vlore, bringing to 27 the number of people killed in a week of rioting there that saw anti-government insurgents loot army barracks, seize weapons and attack police barracks.

But Vlore was reported to be calm at midday Friday.

Government officials have conceded that the situation in Vlore, Sarande and other southern points is out of control.

But protestors were suspicious of the government's pledge to halt offensive military operation for 48 hours, from 6:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) Friday.

"We are afraid of repression once we surrender our weapons. The army is still surrounding the city," said one Vlore resident reached by telephone.

The government, under increasing international pressure to open dialogue with the opposition, also offered an amnesty to protestors who turn in stolen arms except those who had committed "crimes".

A state of emergency was declared Sunday after the rioting flared, ignited by nearly two months of tension over the collapse of pyramid investment schemes in which thousands of Albanians lost their life's savings.

Insurgents in Sarande also warned they would not surrender weapons until a "new legitimate government" is in place.

"We want a peaceful solution to the conflict, early elections, the resignation of president (Sali) Berisha and the formation of a government of technocrats," said a man who identified himself as Colonel Tzavar, military leader of rebels in Sarande.

Elsewhere, rebels set up heavy weapons, including cannons and mortars, on the edge of two other towns, Memaliaj and Tepelena. (AFP)



AGIOI SARANTA, Albania (March 4): An injured resident of the Albanian town of Agioi Saranta raises a handgun as he checks a car in the city's center. Citizen took control over the city after looting weapons, when they stormed March 2 an Albanian Navy base in the city. Clashes between Albanian soldiers and rioting Albanians were reported from various cities and towns in Albania. The protestors mainly demand the resignation of President Sali Berisha's government on anger over the collapse of pyramid scheme investment companies. (AFP PHOTO)

Death Toll From Tiger Attacks Rises to 278

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — For weeks last month, Sri Lankan soldiers advanced steadily in the northwest with little resistance from Tamil Tigers. Now the guerrillas have struck back, with surprise attacks to the east that left 278 fighters dead.

Thursday's coordinated, pre-dawn attacks on a military base and an airfield may have been an attempt to force the military to redeploy soldiers to the east, easing pressure on the guerillas in the north, said Sri Lankan military analyst Harry Goonatilleke.

The military said 73 soldiers were killed and more than 80 wounded at Vavunativu Army Base, 220 kilometers (135 miles) east of Colombo, the capital. The rebel toll was put at 200 guerrillas, military officials said Friday on condition of anonymity.

The guerrillas overran Vavunativu, headquarters for 200 soldiers, at about 1:45 a.m. Thursday, withdrawing only after withering strafing from helicopter gunships. At the same time, they attacked the China Bay air base, 80 kilometers (50 miles) away, and fought for hours.

Four rebels with explosives strapped to their bodies were shot dead before they could detonate the bombs inside the air base, said military spokesman Maj. D. Ranawaka. An airman was also killed at China Bay.

"For a guerrilla force to stick around and fight for seven hours is very serious. It shows that the Tigers are still quite strong, especially in the east, despite the army's recent advances in the north," said Goonatilleke, a retired air force chief.

Thursday's attacks were the deadliest since Jan. 9, when 223 soldiers and 350 guerrillas were killed in an unsuccessful rebel onslaught on a northern military base. (AP)

Students and Laborers Scuffle With Police Ahead of Strike Deadline

SEOUL – Hundreds of South Korean students and workers scuffled Friday with riot police as Parliament waged a losing struggle to revise a new labor law before a Saturday strike deadline.

Shouting "Cancel the Labor Law! Cancel the National Security Law!" demonstrators staged a rally in Chongmo Park, then headed through the streets to Myongdong cathedral, witnesses said.

Scuffles broke out as police blocked off roads to the cathedral, used as a headquarters by leaders of the strike against the law pushed through in January. No casualties were reported.

The January strikes were triggered when the ruling New Korea Party (NKP) railroaded the labor legislation, which the unions say favors management, in a sneak pre-dawn Parliament session, when no opposition members were present.

Also forced through was the national security law, giving increased powers to the security police.

Militant unions have said they will restart the strikes unless Parliament can reach an "acceptable" revision of the law by Saturday, a deadline that late Friday appeared jeopardized.

In Parliament, MP's said the NKP and opposition parties had reached a compromise on most issues including retaining a no-work no-pay principle in the original law. (AFP)

Guerrilla Leader Killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India — Indian security forces have killed a top guerrilla in a gun battle in the northern state of Jammu-Kashmir, police said Friday.

Mohammed Yusuf Ganai, 40, local chief of the Hizbul Mujahedeen, the biggest guerrilla force in the state, was killed late Thursday night during a raid in Chiuchu village in Anantnag district, 60 kilometers (40 miles) south of Srinagar, the state's summer capital.

Sayeed Salahuddin, the chief of the Hizbul Mujahedeen, lives in neighboring Pakistan, according to the police.

Ganai, known by his code name Saifullah, was wanted for more than 100 killings and commanded nearly 2,000 fighters, police officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

The Hizbul Mujahedeen and the Harkat ul-Ansar are the two fiercest organizations among the dozen groups that have been fighting since 1989 to secede the Himalayan province from India. (AP)

Communists Poised to Retake Power in Nepal

KATMANDU, Nepal — Communists were poised to take power again in Nepal Friday after the prime minister they had twice failed to topple lost his own vote of confidence.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had called Thursday's vote to show his strength after 17 months in power. His narrow loss surprised even his main rival, the Communist Party of Nepal.

"We thought he would get through the confidence motion by a narrow margin," said communist leader and former Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari.

Adhikari's Marxist party has the largest block of seats - 90 - in the 205-member Parliament. Several lawmakers who withheld support from Deuba Thursday were believed ready to ally themselves with Adhikari in a new government. (AP)

Belgium Wakes Up to Horror of New Child Murder

BRUSSELS — Belgium awoke on Thursday to the horror of another child murder — that of a nine-year-old girl missing since August 1992.

The remains of Loubna Benaissa were found late on Wednesday in a crate of car parts in the cellar of a garage just metres (yards) from her home in central Brussels.

The cause of death was not immediately known, but a convicted sex offender whose family owned the garage was placed under arrest along with three other men.

Patrick Derochette, 33, who received a suspended sentence in 1984 for child molesting, was being questioned on Thursday by a special police unit set up last summer following the discovery of children murdered by another pedophile gang.

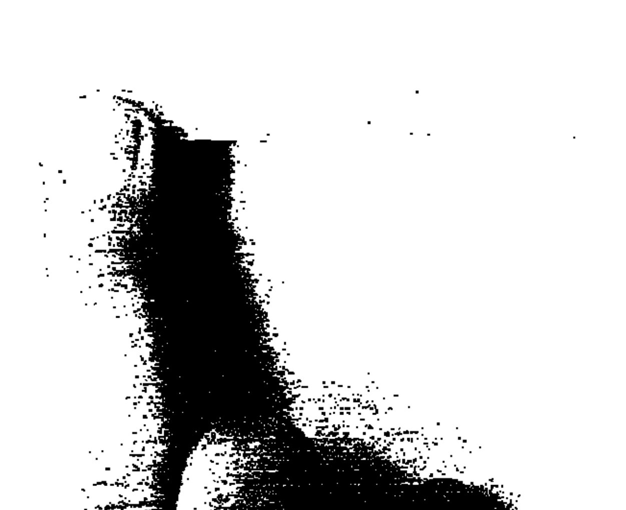
No links have yet been established between the two groups.

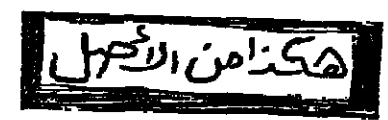
Although we do not yet have final scientific evidence, we are very certain we have found the body of Loubna Benaissa, Michel Bourlet, the unit's chief investigator, told a news conference.

There are no words to describe the horror which inspires such (cowardly) acts, Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene said in a statement, summing up the nation's feelings. (Reuter)



KINDU, Zaire (March 5): A Zairean rebel soldier stands amongst a crowd of residents in Kindu, three days after the key town was seized by Zairean rebels. Villagers in Kindu made plain their hunger for democracy at a public meeting Thursday with a rebel "minister". (AFP PHOTO)





Europe Fails to Tackle Unemployment Problem

ROUBAIX, France — Francois, 54, thought he was set up for life as director of a big electronics company.

"I was in charge of staff and involved sometimes in lay-offs. One day I found myself on the other side of the fence," he says.

Though now working again, he spent two years searching for a job and discovered the world had changed dramatically since he joined the labor force.

"When I began working there was full employment. When I became unemployed I was completely disoriented by the instability of the market. People of my generation lived with the illusion that if they gave their life to a company, the company would look after them," he said.

Francois is only one of around 18 million people hit by Europe's jobs crisis, which started in traditional heavy industries and has since seeped upwards to what in France they call the haut cadres — workers in top management.

But despite jobless levels not seen since World War II, Europe's leaders have been unable to find an answer.

French President Jacques Chirac came to power in 1995 pledging to make jobs the top priority, only to preside over an ever-increasing jobless rate, now a record 12.7 percent.

"No-one is safe any more," says Claire, a local authority worker at a meeting of a pressure group against unemployment in the northern French industrial town of Roubaix.

Here they still remember when people were bussed in from all over the region to work in the town's textile mills, and where more than one in four are now out of work in some areas.

Government schemes to help the unemployed with subsidized temporary contracts have simply pushed out other permanent staff, making no net difference to joblessness.

"We are going through a major revolution and they want to try to treat it with old recipes," says Jery, president of the Roubaix branch of Work Together Against Unemployment, which is campaigning for a cut in working hours to boost jobs.

It is also involved in preparing a march against unemployment starting in April from towns including Helsinki, Edinburgh, Sarajevo and Berlin and converging on Amsterdam in June to coincide with a summit of European Union leaders.

"People at the meeting mutter about those in power using unemployment to push wages down. They'll be cloning the unemployed next," says Patrick.

Unemployment at top of agenda in Germany, France

But after years of neglect, the plight of the jobless has risen to the top of the agenda in both France and Germany as politicians warm up for parliamentary elections next year.

Even German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who as Europe's longest-serving head of government is seen as the essential player in the drive to European Monetary Union, has come under fire for failing to tackle the problem.

A recent poll showed some 70 percent of Germans believed Bonn was handling the jobs issue badly.

And a weekend report in the weekly *Bild Am Sonntag* newspaper said German unemployment hit 4.8 million in February, topping the record 4.66 million of the previous month. It would be the highest level since the great depression of the 1930s.

The head of Germany's Federal Labor Office could not confirm the figure, and considered it unlikely. "But I fear that one day there will be a rude awakening if we do not soon get a handle on unemployment," Bernhard Jagoda was quoted by the daily *Bild* newspaper on Monday as saying.

Leaders of the influential German Catholic Bishops' Conference and Protestant Churches in Germany last week declared January's 12.2 percent jobless rate a catastrophe.

"Work is a human right and we cannot allow ourselves to simply accept the fact that this right is being denied to more than one-tenth of our workforce," Klaus Engelhardt, chairman of the Council of Protestant Churches, told a news conference.

The story is the same throughout Europe.

"The single most important problem Belgium is facing today is unemployment," Belgian Central Bank Governor Alfons Verplaetse said last month. He called on unions and employers to focus on job creation, rather than wages.

Aside from the social cost, joblessness has taken a big toll on economies, depressing consumer spending and braking growth.

And by limiting government revenues, it has undercut efforts to reduce public deficits in preparation for monetary union, leaving even Germany struggling to cut its deficit to the required three percent of gross domestic product.

Growth May Be Main Answer to Jobless Problem

Until recently, private economists have pointed to more flexible hire-and-fire labor markets in the United States and, to a lesser extent, Britain as the model solution to mainland Europe's unemployment problem.

But there is a growing perception that such flexible systems, where wages are driven down to match demand, create their own problems of income inequality, poverty and crime and may create a less well-educated and less competitive workforce.

"I do think the systematic, sometimes brutal, hire and fire system does harm to the social cohesion we have in our countries," said Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker.

"I'm not saying the British reality is this reality but the risk that the hire and fire approach on the continent could lead to such a situation is a very high one and we are not prepared to take that risk," he told Reuters financial television.

Some place their hope for an improvement in the launch of a single currency in 1999, meant to repay all the austerity of the last decade or so by providing a much-needed boost to growth.

For economist Pierre-Alain Muet at France's OFCE think-tank, weak growth has been the main cause of unemployment, which he says has become structural only because the long-term unemployed have been left out of work for too long.

Competition from countries with low wages could account for only 1/2 to one percentage point in the unemployment rate, he says in a study of Europe's jobless problem.

He also argues that comparisons between European countries show many reasons given for unemployment are false, since factors blamed in one country — such as France's high payroll charges — are not seen as responsible in others.

"Weakness in Europe is less in the rigidity of its labor markets or in its inability to tackle international competition, as in its

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Nomura Ends Morning Lower After Shady Deals Revealed

TOKYO — The share price of Nomura Securities Co. Ltd. fell Friday morning after it disclosed alleged illegal trading to generate profits for criminal corporate extorters.

The stock ended the morning session at 1,540 yen, down 40 yen or 2.5%, after easing to as low as 1,510 yen.

A broker at one of Japan's "big four" securities houses said: "we sold about 1.3 to 1.4 million shares of Nomura, but a foreign securities house soon picked them up."

(AFP)

Renault Workers to Stage Stoppages in Protest at Redundancies

PARIS -- Work stoppages at Renault car plants in France and Spain, and throughout the Belgian automobile industry, were planned Friday in protest at Renault's controversial decision to shut down its plant in Belgium and sack workers in France to cut costs.

The one-hour stoppages were scheduled to take place at varying times according to the factory involved.

The French government held direct talks with Belgian regional officials Thursday on a safety net for the 3,100 workers set to lose their jobs when the Renault factory at Vilvorde outside Brussels closes down on July 31.

At the same time Renault chief Louis Schweitzer defended the closure, saying it was necessary for the group's survival.

He said the first duty of the group's leadership was to preserve the future of Renault and of its 140,000 workers. But he acknowledged that there was "no kind way" to close a factory.

Schweitzer said Renault was producing more vehicles in Europe than it could sell and needed to cut back production capacity. He said the choice fell on Vilvorde because wage costs there were higher by between 25 and 30 percent than those in France.

French Industry Minister Franck Borotra said on France-Inter Radio late Thursday that he had talked earlier to Flanders officials about social measures to cushion the blow to workers.

But he added, "it is not for us to take the place of the company president in the decision he made".

Borotra said he and Flanders Minister-President Luc Van Den Brande had met to discuss how the best deal for the workers in the way of redundancy pay and job reconversion could be obtained.

The French government, which still holds %46 of Renault after successive privatization operations over the past three years, entered the melee in response to bitter criticism of the closure by the Belgian government.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Alain Juppe asked Schweitzer "to start without delay all necessary consultations within the framework of Belgian law and European legislation.

President Jacques Chirac said he was "shocked" by the brutal way in which the closure was announced.

Schweitzer Thursday reaffirmed his readiness to discuss social measures in Belgium "as soon as our partners agree" to open talks, and he offered to find new jobs in France for Belgian workers prepared to take them.

But this latter solution would pose the problem of language because vilvorde workers speak flemish, not French, and would also complicate the severance terms envisaged in france for the 2,764 workers due to be made redundant.

Schweitzer pledged to do his best to find a company willing to take over vilvorde in order to save the jobs. The south korean firm kia has already expressed interest.

"The need to safeguard the future of the Vilvorde industrial unit will take precedence over any desire to prevent one of our competitors, of whatever nationality, from moving in," he said.

Schweitzer explained that in 1992, in negotiations with the Japanese on import quotas for foreign cars in Europe, the European Commission had expected the European market for private cars to be bigger by more than two million vehicles than what it is today.

For Renault, which controls a little over 10% of the European market, this would have meant producing 200,000 more cars a year, Schweitzer said.

The problem, he said, was that the European Commission got its sums wrong and demand for cars slumped.

Meanwhile French and Belgian unions have called on workers to stage a mass demonstration outside Renault head offices next Tuesday.

They called for the cancellation of the decisions concerning lay-offs and the closure and for group-wide negotiations.

Stoppages are planned for Friday at factories in France and Spain and throughout the Belgian car industry.

On Thursday, a meeting of the Renault works committee was cut short when French union representatives walked out when the management balked at calls to let the secretary of the Vilvorde works committee, Raymond Smeulders, address the meeting.

About 300 workers from Vilvorde, who had travelled to Boulogne-Billancourt, the western Paris suburb where Renault is based, then staged a demonstration outside backed by several hundred French Renault workers.

The European commission has meanwhile stepped up pressure on Renault and has blocked $17 million in EU aid for the Renault plant in Valladolid, Spain "to demonstrate clearly that it is not possible to transfer profitable business from one EU country to another while at the same time pocketing aid from public funds". (AFP)

Kia Motors Says No Intention to Take Over Renault's Belgian Auto Plant

SEOUL — South Korea's Kia Motors Corp. Friday said it was not mulling any move to take over a Belgian car plant owned by loss-making French auto giant Renault.

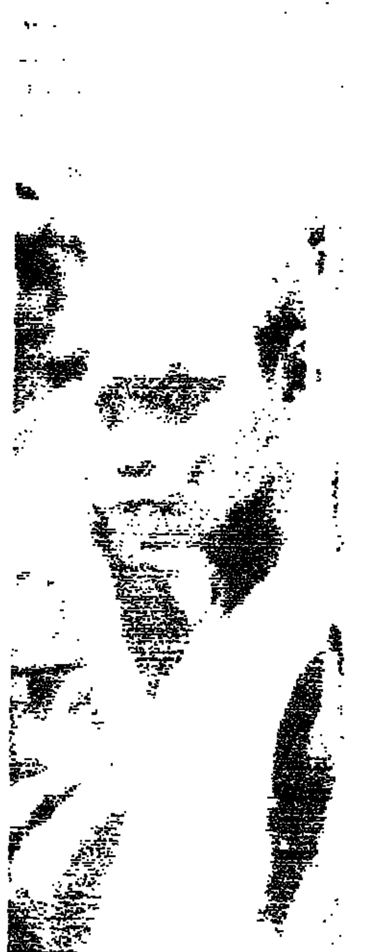
"Kia has no intention to take over Renault's Belgian plant," a company spokesman in Seoul said, adding reports quoting its official in Brussels were "misinterpreted."

An auto analyst here contended Kia was "not capable" of taking over the debt-ridden auto operations given its own current financial status.

De Financieel Economische Tijd, a Belgian financial daily, Thursday reported Kia had expressed interest in the acquisition of Renault's Belgian plant, which is due to shut down as part of the French firm's cost-cutting drive.

The closure announcement, which would cut 2,700 jobs in France, sparked protests by unions and the Belgian government.

(AFP)



Jardine Matheson Unit, LG Group Buy Stakes in Vietnamese Bank

HANOI — The Jardine Matheson Group, LG Group of Korea and two investment funds have independently bought a combined 30% stake in a Vietnamese private Bank, one of the investors said Friday.

Hong kong-based Jardine's cunnaught holdings and LG have acquired 8% stakes in Ho Chi Minh City-based Asia Commercial Bank, the second private Vietnamese bank to receive the green light to sell shares to foreigners.

(AFP)

Thailand Overcome by Economy in Rapid Expansion

HONG KONG — Thai authorities were overcome by the weaknesses of an economy in rapid expansion, the head of the International Monetary Fund said here Friday.

"It is important to take action before the crisis begins to take too big a dimension," said IMF managing director Michel Camdessus.

"It is important that the Thai authorities are now taking action that we have recomended for some time," Camdessus added at a press conference.

But Camdessus emphasized the Thai government had all the "instruments in hand" to overcome the country's "transitional" economic crisis.

"Today we are in a situation which is difficult for the Thai authorities," he told reporters on the sidelines of an IMF-Hong Kong monetary authority conference here.

However, he added: "it is not a crisis of a country with poor fundamentals. Thailand will take steps . . . . I believe they have all the instruments in hand." Camdessus said the country's financial sector had been "made more fragile by rapid expansion of the economy," as well as a large current account deficit, budget problems and the need to recapitalise banks.

There is a need to reajust and for a "strengthening of the fiscal situation."

The IMF had been "recommending action for some time. .. But I would not like to single out Thailand as a risky country," Camdessus added.

"As in many countries after a phase of very rapid growth, Thailand has two major problems — a weakening of the financial institutions that should be adressed through the proper measures of recapitalisation, and a current account deficit that requires a strengthening of the fiscal situation."

(AFP)

Derochette Had Long History of Abuse

The investigation into Benaissa's disappearance was marked by allegations of bungling by authorities who were accused of not taking the case seriously, failing to appoint an investigating judge and for closing the file on the case after just two years.

BRUSSELS — Patrick Derochette, the man at the center of Belgium's latest paedophilia sex scandal, had been abusing children since he was a teenager, it emerged on Thursday.

The Brussels mechanic was charged Thursday with rape and abduction just hours after the body of Loubna Benaissa, a nine-year-old who went missing from the same neighborhood in August 1992, was discovered in the basement of his parents' garage.

Investigators with sniffer dogs and high-tech equipment had searched for hours on Wednesday in the section of Ixelles where she vanished while running an errand to a local supermarket.

The area is popular with North African immigrants and dozens of Arabic-speaking residents gathered at the scene on Wednesday awaiting news of the investigation.

The investigation into Benaissa's disappearance was marked by allegations of bungling by authorities who were accused of not taking the case seriously, failing to appoint an investigating judge and for closing the file on the case after just two years.

Now 33, Derochette was convicted in June 1984 for committing acts of gross indecency with three boys after being prosecuted on the more serious charges of rape and abduction.

The first incident dated from August 7, 1982, when Derochette was 16. His victim was 13. Further incidents followed in July 1983 and February 1984, involving boys of nine and 11. The latter case involved a threat of violence.

Passing judgement on June 13, 1984, a Brussels court underlined the increasing severity of Derochette's assaults and his apparent inability to control his desires.

A psychiatrist who testified at the trial described him as suffering from a "serious mental imbalance which has left him incapable of controlling his actions."

On the basis of this advice, Derochette was sent to a psychiatric institute rather than prison. Within six weeks it had been decided that he had been "cured" and no longer represented a threat to society.

He was promptly released under certain conditions, his bail finally being lifted in 1992, just months before Loubna was snatched within meters) of her home.

Days after she disappeared, Derochette was questioned by police but his explanation that he was having dinner with his brother at the time of her kidnapping apparently satisfied th-n and the alibi was never properly checked out. Other important leads that should have led to Derochette were also effectively ignored.

Although the charges against Derochette pale in comparison with the crimes attributed to Marc Dutroux, who is awaiting trial for abducting six girls and is expected to be eventually charged with murdering the four of them found dead on his property, his case has been marked by a similar level of official incompetence.

Like Derochette, Marc Dutroux had a record of child abuse but detectives searching for missing children never carried out basic checks on his movements or his activities that might have linked him to the disappearances.

Derochette's case was reopened in august last year after the discovery of bodies of four girls murdered by a gang allegedly led by child rapist Marc Dutroux.

Dutroux was arrested following the rescue from a makeshift dungeon in his house of Sabine Dardenne and Laetitia Delhez — both of whom had been sexually abused.

Two days later Dutroux led police to the bodies of eight-year-old Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, buried in the garden of one of his six houses in and around the central Belgian city of Charleroi. The girls had starved to death.

Barely two weeks later Dutroux again led police to another house where they unearthed the bodies of teenagers An Marchal and Eefje Lambrecks.

The parents of the dead girls launched a campaign complaining at police and judicial bungling in the searches for their daughters. They were joined by the parents of other missing children including Elizabeth Brichet and Loubna.

In October more than 250,000 people took to the streets of Brussels in what came to be known as the White March — the biggest peacetime demonstration of its kind in the country. Early on Thursday, activists from the populist group gathered in Ixelles to hand out leaflets and pictures of children still unaccounted for.

(Dispatches)

William Purves, Austere Head of World's Richest Bank

"But he is deep down a very nice man, a fair man, who inspires great loyalty and hard work. People here tend to stay with the company — there is very little staff turnover compared with other banks."

HONG KONG — Who really runs Hong Kong?

Is it the governor? The head of the jockey club? Or is it the chairman of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC)?

No-one knows for sure, but everyone agrees it's not the governor ...

The kernel of truth in this local joke was especially apt recently when the HSBC empire unveiled the biggest profits in banking history, a golden mountain of 4.524 billion British pounds (7.328 billion dollars).

Yet the man credited with generating this bonanza, HSBC Holdings chairman Sir William Purves, hardly corresponds to the image of a Hong Kong power baron.

He is a stern but modest Presbyterian Scot of the old school, a man who began working life as a bank clerk, making tea and sticking stamps on envelopes.

While some corporate chiefs have acquired the status of media stars or economic gurus, Purves, 65, hates publicity and shuns encounters with the press, preferring instead to make a staged appearance for the company's annual results.

HSBC executives describe purves as gruff and austere, "totally unpretentious ... a banker's banker", famous for giving the pompous, the pretentious and the time-waster the rough edge of his tongue.

He is also portrayed as a perfectionist, a ferocious cost-cutter and minder of pennies.

According to legend, Purves, taking a train trip from a northern English city to London, waved aside an aide who steered him towards the first-class compartment, explaining that he preferred to travel second-class because he had a rail card that entitled him to a 50-percent discount.

Another anecdote is that Purves once made photocopies for his wife, using the office machine, and insisted on paying the 10-pence (16-cent) cost of the copies.

"He wants to give a good example to employees and reassure shareholders that their money is being well spent," said the HSBC employee who recounted that tale.

"But he is deep down a very nice man, a fair man, who inspires great loyalty and hard work. People here tend to stay with the company — there is very little staff turnover compared with other banks."

After taking over the chairmanship of HSBC in 1986, Purves worked 18-hour days to clear up the wreckage left by the collapse of Carrian Group, a conglomerate whose crash left the bank exposed to the tune of U.S.$180 million.

He then embarked on a program of expansion, firstly by pioneering a hostile takeover of the troubled Midland Bank PLC of Britain.

That move gave HSBC a European base and — by shifting its incorporation to London — a safe haven after Hong Kong's handover to China this July.

Other big acquisitions have been the London stockbroker of James Capel and Lloyds Bank of Canada, and big investments in expanding the HSBC group in Southeast Asia and China.

Purves has overseen a prudent lending policy based on relations of "trust and faith" which have given HSBC extremely low exposure to dud loan$, said an HSBC source in Australasia.

Born to a family of humble means in the Scottish border town of Kelso, Purves' whole life has been in banking, except for a period in the British army.

Fighting against the Chinese in the Korean war, he became the only conscripted soldier in British history to be awarded the distinguished Service Order, the country's second highest medal for gallantry. He never speaks of the feat, sources say.

After working with the National Bank of Scotland, he joined the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. in 1954 and moved up the ranks steadily, rather than meteorically.

He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1993, and characteristically told staff not to use the honorific of "sir" on internal memos.

"It has nothing to do with modesty, I just think it is sensible," he told the *South China Morning Post*. "Think of all the extra time it takes to type things like that on to letters. It's much better to be just a simple colleague."

Asked how he would prefer to be addressed. Purves said: "I'd be very happy if you just call me Willie." *(AFP)*

Journalists Could Be Forced to Disclose Sources

NEW DELHI — An Indian court has ruled that journalists could be forced to disclose their sources, newspapers said Friday.

Judges M.J. Rao and Manmohan Sarin of the Delhi High Court said although they agreed in principle that courts should not compel journalists to reveal their sources, it could be done "in the interest of justice."

"In order to be deserving of freedom, the press must show itself worthwhile of it. A free press must be a responsible press," the *Asian Age* quoted the judges as saying Thursday.

"As the power of press is great, it must not abuse its power. If a newspaper should act irresponsibly, then it forfeits its claim to protect its source of information."

The ruling followed a legal battle after the *Pioneer* newspaper here carried a story hinting that the "builders' mafia" in the Indian capital had the backing of courts.

The report was attributed to "a top official of the Delhi government." The *Pioneer* refused to identify the source, but apologized to the High Court for the story.

(AFP)

Mandela Ducks Question of Marriage

SINGAPORE — South African President Nelson Mandela was non-committal Thursday on the future of his relationship with companion Graca Machel, saying only time will tell whether they will get married.

"I have got bosses — my bosses are around me," the 78-year- old president joked, gesturing to South African officials at a press conference. "They decide where I should go.

"And if they do not object to any association which I have I may continue as I have done now," he said when asked whether Machel, 51, would accompany him on future trips, and whether their relationship would become "more formal."

"But let us leave the matter as far as what is likely to happen in future," said Mandela. "There are two of us, and the decision does not depend on one person."

Mandela has been accompanied by Machel, the widow of Mozambique's former independence leader Samora Moises Machel, as his official "companion" on his 10-day trip to South-east Asia including stops in the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia.

A former freedom fighter and political icon in her own country, Machel last month joined Mandela at the official reception for King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Queen Silvia.

Despite friendly pressure from Mandela's friend, former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, that they get married, South African presidential aide Parks Mankahlana last week denied any wedding bells would sound soon for the couple.

The couple got to know each other in 1993 when Mandela became godfather to Machel's seven children, one year after separating from his second wife, Winnie.

In March last year, he finally got a divorce from Winnie. In 1958 he had divorced his first wife, Evelyn Ntoko.

Most of his married life with Winnie was spent however in jail and, after being freed in 1992 he admitted he was overwhelmed by loneliness, something Machel now seems to have ended.

Machel is mother of three and step-mother of four. Mandela has two daughters with Winnie, Zinzi and Zenani, as well as a son and a daughter from his first marriage, and several grandchildren. A third child from the first marriage was killed in a car accident.

(AFP)

BSkyB and Kirch to End Satellite Deal

LONDON — British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB), the satellite broadcasting operation controlled by Rupert Murdoch, and Kirch Gruppe, the German media group, were to announce on Friday that they have ended their digital satellite joint venture, a press report said here Friday.

They will cite "failure to agree a number of fundamental issues" as the reason for the mutually agreed decision, according to the *Financial Times*.

In July, BSkyB announced it had agreed to take a 49 percent stake in the Kirch Group's digital television programs, known as DF1. *(AFP)*

Britain's Royals Go On-Line

LONDON — The pooches made it onto the Web. The duchess didn't.

Queen Elizabeth II launched the first official royal Web site on Thursday, with 150 pages of history, information and trivia for cyberloyalists to scroll through.

"This is the official Web site of the monarchy in Britain," greets the home page, beneath a glittering color picture of the imperial state crown, worn by the queen at state openings of Parliament. "We hope you find your visit informative and enjoyable."

The queen, who sees the Internet as promoting one of her most favored goals — communications among nations — launched the site at a high school in north London by sending an e-mail to some of her subjects in a school in the tiny town of Nakina, central Ontario.

"I am sure that some of you have parents and grandparents at home who have found the Internet and the World Wide Web to be a bit of a mystery," she told the students in London.

"But the Internet is rapidly becoming a part of everyday life, and used properly, it opens the door to a huge range of knowledge which has no national boundaries."

The royal crest topping each page, visitors can delve into the details of heir to the throne Prince Charles' favorite charity, his prince's trust that encourages start-up ventures — or they can get the lowdown on the royal corgis (phoenix, pharos, kelpe and swift.)

Other royal trivia: Prince Philip drives a Range Rover, but "for short journeys around London, uses a metrocab," one of London's black taxis.

Some royals get their own links, including Princess Diana. Those hungry for divorce details, however, will be disappointed by the lone and lonely reference, in Charles' link: "The marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales was dissolved in August 1996."

The former Sarah Ferguson, who divorced the queen's second son, Andrew, last year fares worse: she doesn't even merit a link.

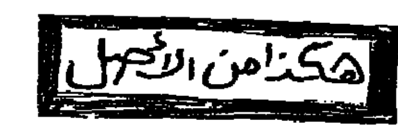
"We have no answer to that," was the terse reply from the Duchess of York's spokeswoman when asked why she doesn't get equal treatment.

Recent newspaper reports have said that the queen is pleased by Diana's silence on matters marital since the divorce, and takes a dimmer view of the duchess' tendency to tell all.

The site is low on pictures, making for quicker downloading time.

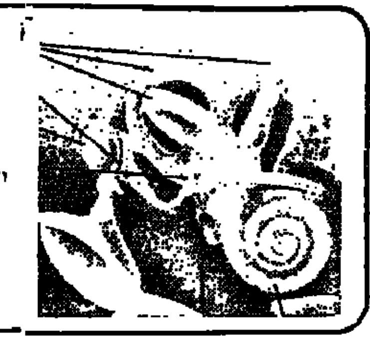
Other links include tours of the palaces and royal collections, accession charts and forthcoming royal events and visits.

The royal Web page is located at http://www.royal.gov.uk. *(AP)*









He Declared War on Heart Attacks

This story could save your life

The pain struck suddenly in his chest as George Fickus filled a vending machine with sodas. A gleam of perspiration broke out over Fickus's body — but then, all at once, the pain was gone.

I'll go home and rest, thought the 57-year-old Baltimore man. Shaken, he walked slowly back to his van to tell his assistant he was taking the rest of the day off. But Blaine Pierce took one look at his boss and said, "No way — I'm taking you to the hospital."

Pierce, 27, recognized the pained look and pale, sweaty sheen on Fickus's face because several years earlier his father had died of a heart attack. "My dad was perspiring like that and had chest pain, but he wouldn't go to the hospital," Pierce told Fickus. "Before we knew it, he was dead. I'm not going to let that happen again."

Fortunately they were near Baltimore's St. Agnes HealthCare. This community hospital has the world's oldest chest pain center — a special emergency service for patients with suspected heart attacks. Within minutes of his arrival, Fickus was hooked up to a heart monitor, an intravenous line and an oxygen tank. A pulse oximeter (a small clip that looks like a clothespin) was placed on his middle finger to measure the oxygen reserve in his blood.

Dr. Raymond Bahr strode briskly through the door. The gentle, whitehaired physician peered at the heart monitor and studied the patient's electrocardiogram. He saw that Fickus was experiencing the "stuttering presentation" of intermittent chest pain, likely to mean a heart attack in progress. Bahr instructed a nurse to administer tissue plasminogen activator, a drug that dissolves clots and prevents damage from occurring. "You're lucky," he told Fickus, laying a reassuring hand on the patient's arm. "You arrived within the first 'golden' hour when our therapies are most effective. You should be fine."

Farfetched Dream. Working in an ordinary community hospital, not a major academic center, Raymond Bahr is an unlikely hero in the war on heart attacks. Yet his creation and promotion of chest pain centers in hospitals nationwide are dramatically changing the treatment of people with suspected heart attacks. In addition, Bahr has pioneered a program that enables people to recognize and take action when faced with the early warning signs of America's No. 1 killer. According to Bahr, half of the nation's 500,000 heart-attack deaths each year could be prevented if people sought help right away.

Born in 1935, Bahr grew up in Canton, Md., a working-class section on Baltimore's East Side. Life became tough when Ray's father, a factory worker, died suddenly. Ray was only six. His mother, pregnant with her fourth child at the time, supported her family by scrubbing floors and cleaning houses.

As a teen-ager, Ray got a job after school at Kaminski's drugstore to help pay for his parcochial-school education. Ray always assumed he would work at the area's brewery, steel mill or tin-can plant. With owner Felix Kaminski's encouragement, however, the youngster set a higher goal for himself: he attended pharmacy school while working at the store nights and weekends. After graduating first in his class of 52 students, he stayed on at Kaminski's.

One day Bahr was busy behind the counter when Jake, the neighborhood tailor, came bustling into the pharmacy. There was something about Jake's skin — its paleness and sweaty gleam — that spurred Bahr to ask if something was wrong. "I'm not feeling quite right," Jake admitted. "I think I have indigestion. It woke me early this morning then went away. Now it's back."

"You should see a doctor," Bahr told him. Then Bahr became distracted with other customers, and Jake left. Hours later the tailor was found dead of a massive heart attack.

Bahr then realized that Jake must have been in the early stages of a heart attack and should have gotten immediate medical help. He didn't have to die. Feeling awful, the 22-year-old pharmacist wished he could spare others the same fate.

One night Kaminski brought up an idea that ignited his protege's thinking. "You know, you don't have to stop at being a pharmacist," Kaminski said. "You can go to medical school and work here on nights and weekends to pay for it."

Altered Brain Communication System Seen in Schizophrenia

NEW YORK — People with schizophrenia showed unusually few docking sites for a chemical messenger in the front part of their brains, researchers found.

The messenger, called dopamine, delivers its message by binding to these sites, called receptors. There are five kinds of dopamine receptors, and the study found a decrease in the kind called d1.

The fewer d1 receptors a patient had, the worse he tended to suffer such symptoms as emotional withdrawal and apathy, and the worse he did on a test of mental flexibility. So drugs that target d1 receptors for stimulation may be useful in treatment, Japanese researchers suggest in the Feb.13 issue of the journal *Nature*.

They studied 17 people with schizophrenia and 18 healthy people.

Ten of the patients had never gotten drug treatment for the disease, so scientists could rule out an impact of medication on d1 receptor numbers.

But it's not clear whether the reduced d1 numbers are part of the cause of schizophrenia or a reaction to the disease, Dr. Eric Nestler of the Yale University School of Medicine wrote in an accompanying editorial.

Ripley's — Believe It or Not!

Gordon Davey of London, England, VOTED "THE MOST BORING HUSBAND IN BRITAIN," HAS BEEN COLLECTING PIECES OF BROWN PAPER from AROUND THE WORLD for THE PAST TEN YEARS!

Believe It or Not! SCIENTISTS DISCOVERED 5,600-YEAR-OLD POPCORN IN A New Mexico BAT CAVE!

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ANCIENT ROMAN MINERS USED THE BACTERIUM "T. ferro-oxidans" TO EXTRACT COPPER from MINES in Spain OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO!

SCRABBLE BRAND GRAMS

N1	O1	O1	E1	R1	D2	D2		RACK 1
P3	T1	W4	A1	A1	H4	R1	4th Letter Triple	RACK 2
C3	E1	I1	S1	D2	L1	T1	Double Word Score	RACK 3
M3	A1	A1	N1	E1	E1	T1		RACK 4

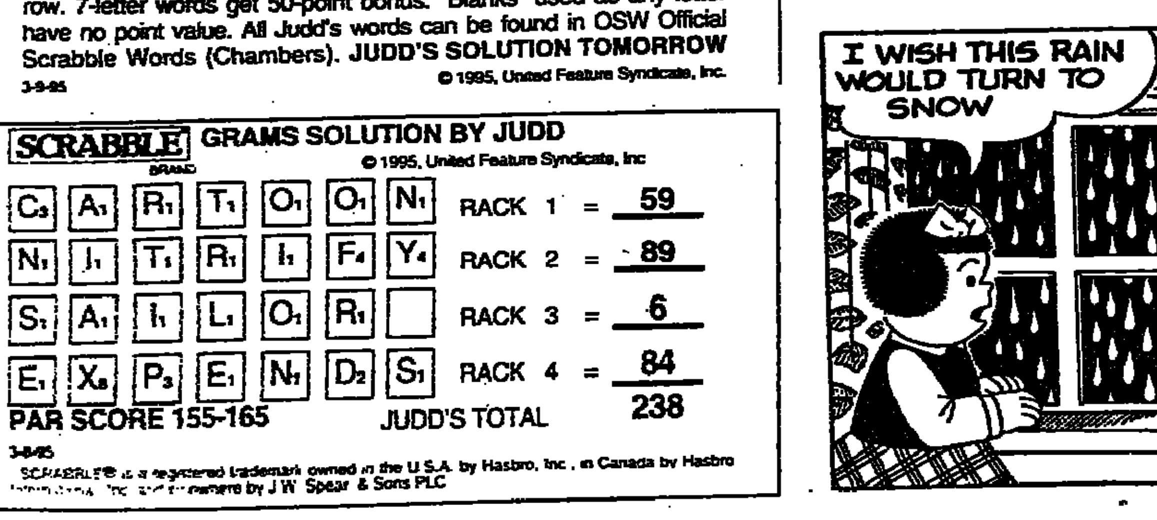
PAR SCORE 135-145

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL _____
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7- letter word from the letters in each row. To total points of your words, use scoring directions to right of each row. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words can be found in OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

3-9-95



SCRABBLE BRAND GRAMS SOLUTION BY JUDD

C3	A1	R1	T1	O1	O1	N1	RACK 1 =	59
N1	I1	T1	R1	I1	F4	Y4	RACK 2 =	89
S1	A1	I1	L1	O1	R1		RACK 3 =	6
E1	X8	P3	E1	N1	D2	S1	RACK 4 =	84

PAR SCORE 155-165 — JUDD'S TOTAL 238

3-8-95

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Imam Hussein (A.S.)

PRAYER

Noon	12:15
Evening	18:25
Dawn (tomorrow)	05:52
Sunrise (tomorrow)	06:24

TODAY IN HISTORY

1969 — Soviet Union puts its Far East army on alert as warning to China after frontier clash on Ussuri River.

1970 — Cyprus President Makarios escapes assassination when terrorist snipers shoot down his helicopter.

1986 — Guerrilla violence in Colombia takes seven lives on day prior to national elections.

1987 — Sri Lankan troops launch large new offensive, killing 11 Tamil militants in northern Jaffna Peninsula.

1988 — UN Security Council speaker condemns South Africa's ban on anti-apartheid organizations.

1989 — Troops converge on Tibetan capital of Lhasa to enforce martial law following three days of anti-Chinese rioting.

1990 — West German Parliament adopts resolution calling on united Germany to honor Poland's western border.

1991 — Forty foreign journalists and two U.S. servicemen captured by Iraqi soldiers are turned over to Red Cross officials in Baghdad.

1992 — Commanders of a planned 14,000 UN peacekeeping force arrive in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

1993 — South Korea's President Kim Young-Sam fires two key generals loyal to past military-dominated regimes in a move to seize civilian control of the army and open the path to reform.

1994 — Indian Jetliner crashes into a parked Russian plane in New Delhi, killing at least seven.



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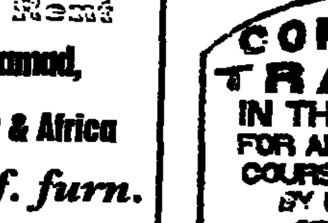


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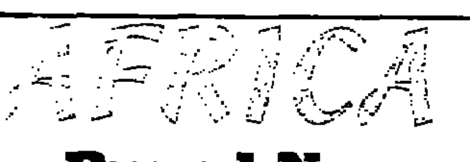
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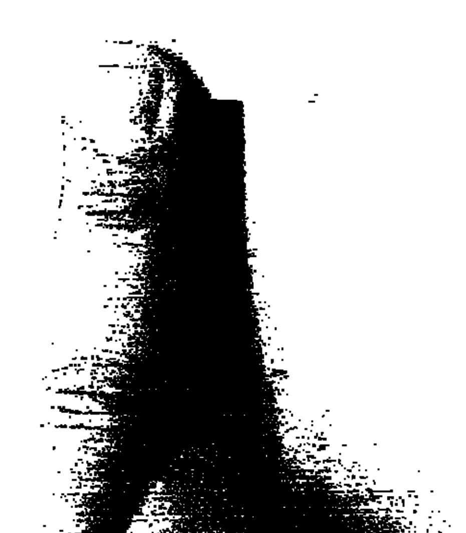
THE SUBMISSION DATE OF ENVELOPES IS THE OFFICIAL CLOSING TIME ON SATURDAY APRIL 12, 1997 AND THE ENVELOPES OPENING DATE IS AT 9:00 A.M. ON MONDAY APRIL 14, 1997 AT TELECOMMUNICATIONS CO. OF IRAN, TRANSACTION COMMITTEE, 2ND FLOOR, BLDG. NO. 5, DR. SHARIATI AVE.

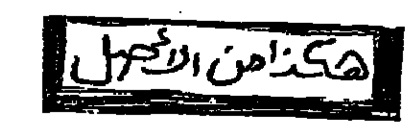
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Yeltsin Says No Time to Lose on Military Reform

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin said there was no time to lose in reforming Russia's armed forces and promised to announce fundamental decisions on the changes soon.

In his annual state of the nation speech to Parliament, Yeltsin confirmed his commitment to ending conscription and turning the army into a professional force, but gave no clues as to whether he would sack the defense minister he has criticized.

We are all extremely concerned by the situation in the Russian armed forces and other troops. Only military reform can rectify the situation, Yeltsin said.

There is no time to lose. As president and supreme commander, I will in the near future be adopting fundamental decisions on military reform.

He did not say what those decisions would be but left no doubt about what he thought of the state of the army, most recently humiliated by its failure to defeat motley but determined guerrilla fighters in breakaway Chechnya.

It (reform) is needed so that a mother's heart can stop aching for the fate of her son who is on service duty, he said.

It is needed so that the Russian serviceman has everything he needs and that officers' families no longer live in poverty.

It is needed to ensure the social protection of officers who have been discharged to the reserve.

Yeltsin has pledged many times, including in state of the nation speeches, to shake up the armed forces but reforms have hardly got started. Doubts remain whether his reform pledges will be carried out even now.

Support of the army remains vital for Yeltsin, as for all previous Kremlin leaders. He turned to it in 1993 to put down a rebellion by hardliners in Parliament, using tanks to blast his opponents into submission.

But the armed forces, once the pride of the Soviet Union, now face food shortages, delayed wages, a lack of fuel, poor coordination and widespread disillusionment.

Defense Minister Igor Rodionov said last month he was in charge of a disintegrating army and a dying navy.

In what appears part of his campaign for more defense spending, he has questioned the reliability of the command centers controlling Russia's nuclear arsenal.

Yeltsin expressed his confidence in Rodionov, 60, last month but seemed to lose patience last week, when he told him to stop whining and get on with reforms. Rodionov's job could be on the line in a cabinet reshuffle to be announced soon.

Yeltsin stuck to his guns on creating a non-conscript army but made no mention of the year 2000 target date which he originally set. Rodionov, among others, has made clear the switch cannot be completed by then.

Reform will provide an opportunity to gradually transfer the strength of the armed forces and other troops on to a contractual and professional basis, Yeltsin said.

A 66-page written statement by Yeltsin accompanying his speech included a condemnation of the state of Russia's armed forces, saying they were technologically lagging far behind other leading nations.

The Russian armed forces are five to 10 years, sometimes up to 15 years, behind the world's most powerful armies in the general level of technical equipment, the document said.

Russia would cut its armed forces both in structure and in manpower and would try to keep them up to date.

Our aim is adequate defense, qualitatively new, slimmer forces armed with modern equipment and weapons, Yeltsin said.

The document underlined the need to speed up reform, stalled over arguments between military officials led by Rodionov and civilians who rule out increases in defense spending.

Yeltsin has already ordered a 200,000-man reduction in the armed forces this year, but the order mainly affects vacant positions. Generals said they had 1.7 million' men under arms before Yeltsin ordered the cut.

(Reuter)



MUNICH, Germany (Feb.25): 34-year-old Bosnian Serb Novislav Djajic (L) – with an unidentified interpreter (R) – waits in the courtroom of a Munich court for the beginning of a trial against him. Djajic went on trial in Munich for complicity in genocide and other war crimes, the first time that a Serb has been tried in Germany for genocide in the former Yugoslavia. Federal German prosecutors say Novislav Djajic, who has lived in Germany since 1993, was a member of a Serbian paramilitary unit which killed 27 Muslim civilians in the Foca region, southeast of Sarajevo, the previous year.

(AFP PHOTO)

Berisha "Ready to Hold Elections in Albania"

ATHENS — Albanian President Sali Berisha has offered to hold new elections in the Balkan country racked by internal unrest, Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis and Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said.

Speaking after talks with Van Mierlo, current chairman of the European Union Council of Ministers, Simitis said that Berisha had told him that he had proposed to opposition groups that elections be held within 45 days.

Van Mierlo confirmed the proposal, adding that the only dispute concerned the date of the elections.

The Dutch minister was due in Tirana Friday for talks with both sides of the Albanian divide. "I am convinced that something positive will emerge to end the current crisis," he said.

Simitis said the only possible solution to Albania's problems was political.

"There must be a dialog between the government and opposition, a jointly-agreed solution must be found, a solution with more democracy, accepted by everyone," he added.

Simitis said that it was hoped that if the political parties could reach agreement on the way to proceed, the armed insurgents seeking the overthrow of Berisha would also have to accept it.

Van Mierlo added that it was important for Europe as a whole to manage the crisis and find a suitable framework for discussions to get under way and resolve the problems.

"There are possibilities for finding a solution because all the member states of the European Commission are in agreement, and that is positive," he said.

Van Mierlo and Simitis also voiced their backing for a planned mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) led by former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitsky, which was due in Tirana Thursday but was postponed.

Van Mierlo called for the involvement of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to tackle the problem of the pyramid investment schemes whose collapse, taking the savings of thousands of people with them, sparked the current unrest.

After unprecedented all-party talks Thursday Berisha decreed a 48-hour halt to military operations in the lawless south of the country to surrender their guns in exchange for amnesty.

But a man who identified himself as Colonel Tzavar, military leader of rebels in the adriatic resort town of Sarande, told Greece's Mega television that only a "new legitimate government" would prompt insurgents to give up arms.

"We want a political solution to the conflict, a promise of elections, the resignation of the president and the formation of a government of technocrats," he said.

Prec Zogaj, leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance, said after the meeting with Berisha that the original demands of the people – compensation for life savings lost in the collapse of the fraudulent investment schemes in Europe's poorest country, as well as fresh elections – remain intact.

(AFP)

Britain's Opposition Labour Party 26 Poll Points Ahead

LONDON — Tony Blair's opposition Labour Party has an unprecedented 26-point poll lead over the ruling Tories just weeks ahead of the general election, according to a survey.

A Gallup poll for the daily *Telegraph* suggests Labour has gained five points over the past month with the Conservatives slipping by six points, adding 11 percent to the Labour lead.

The Gallup snapshot shows Labour now on 54 percent, Prime Minister John Major's Tories on 28 percent, and the centrist Liberal Democrats up half a point at 12.5 percent.

No governing British party has been so far behind in the closing weeks of a Parliament since polling began. Even before their historic defeat by Labour in the 1945 election, the Tories were only 13 points behind their rivals.

A Harris poll carried out for Friday's *Independent* newspaper gave Labour a slightly slimmer 21-point lead.

The poll's adjusted figures give Labour 53 percent support, with the Conservatives on 32 percent.

The two polls come just a week after Labour won a resounding victory in the Wirral South by-election in northwest England, a vote seen as a barometer of national mood for the general election due around May 1.

And they are set against a backdrop of Gallup's larger 9000 survey, which gives Labour 50.9 percent of the vote and a hefty 18.1 lead over the Tories – a majority which would mean a Labour parliamentary majority of 201 seats.

Earlier this week, an ICM poll for *The Guardian* newspaper found evidence of an 18-point Labour lead, despite the fact that their figures are adjusted to take account of the reluctance of some voters to admit that they support the Tories.

The Gallup survey was based on a sample of 1,000 electors interviewed between February 28 – the day after the Wirral South by-election – and Tuesday, March 4.

The Gallup 9000 was based on 7,627 electors between February 10 and March 4, and Harris questioned 1,009 people between February 28 and March 3.

(AFP)

Canada Pushes for Early NATO Deal With Ukraine

OTTAWA — Canada is pressing for a speedy conclusion to NATO agreements with Ukraine and Russia as the alliance plans its eastward expansion, Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said.

Axworthy, speaking beside Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennady Udovenko, said the idea was to conclude the two agreements by the time of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in Madrid in July.

The summit is expected to invite ex-communist Eastern European states like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join the group, formerly directed against the Soviet Union.

I think it's very important that we get the agreements with Russia, with Ukraine concluded by the Madrid agreement so it can all come together as a package, Axworthy told reporters.

Udovenko said negotiations on a special partnership agreement between Ukraine and NATO were a top priority during his visit to Canada as well as planned talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana.

Since Ukraine does not oppose NATO's expansion plans, its agreement was likely to be easier to conclude than the one with Russia, which strongly opposes the NATO move.

Udovenko said the agreement would entail political consultations on a number of security issues, as well as political and economic cooperation.

Earlier on Wednesday Udovenko told the National Press Club in Ottawa that Russia must fully come to terms with the fact that Ukraine is independent.

They need to change their mentality and understand that Ukraine is an independent country, he said, adding that it could take years to change the Russian mindset.

Ukraine became independent in 1991 and has struck a foreign policy line distinct from Russia's.

The minister – who will also visit central Canada, home to numerous Ukrainian immigrants – invited foreign investment.

He said Ukraine could absorb 30 billion to 40 billion in foreign investment to restructure industry. Since independence, Ukraine has attracted only 1.4 billion in private foreign investment.

(Reuter)

Ghana Celebrates 40 Years of Independence

ACCRA — Ghana, the first Sub-Saharan African country to rid itself of colonial rule, Thursday celebrated its 40th anniversary of independence from Britain with little ostentation.

President Henri Konan Bedie of neighboring Ivory Coast was the guest of honor at a ceremony also attended by former Tanzanian Head of State Julius Nyerere, Organization of African Unity Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim and nation of Islam leader, Louis Farakhan of the United States.

The widow of Ghana's first post-independence President, Kwame N'Krumah, ousted in 1966 and widely considered to be the father of pan-Africanism, as well as one of their sons, were also present.

Almost two thousand schoolchildren lined Accra's independence square in front of President Jerry Rawlings and his wife during the six-hour ceremony.

Ministerial delegations from neighboring Togo and Nigeria, as well as Angola, the Gambia, Guinea, Egypt, Liberia and Libya also attended the celebrations.

While the high-level representation of Ivory Coast and Togo suggested the hitherto strained relations between these countries and Ghana has improved, several observers noted the absence of delegates from Burkina Faso, a northern neighbor.

"Our independence is in vain unless we guard it and preserve it," declared rawlings, in power for the last 15 years, during a 10-minute speech.

Flight-lieutenant captain rawlings won a second legitimate term in office when he took 57.6 percent of votes cast in a first round presidential poll last December.

Earlier, in 1979 and 1981, he came to power in two coups d'etat.

He ordered the execution of three preceeding military heads of state: generals Acheampong, Afrifa and Akuffo.

(AFP)

The Making of a Rescue: 17 Minutes of Terror

TIFTON, Georgia — Four-year-old Ryan Eschleman was trapped in grandma's car as it filled with the brackish, frigid water of the pond. On the other side of the rear window, a man pounded against the glass, desperately trying to break it.

Other would-be rescuers were in trouble nearby. A woman was floating, face down. Under the water, a man was unconscious, unseen, and a valiant policeman also struggled beneath the surface.

Ryan's knuckles were white as he clutched the headrest of the back seat.

Now the water was almost up to his neck.

When accidents happen on television, they often happen in slow motion — orchestrated, like a ballet.

But when accidents happen in real life, the world is helter-skelter. The most crucial minutes of Ryan Eschleman's young life were like that. There were 17 of them in all, and they were filled with chaos.

In those few minutes, six men and a woman put aside thoughts of their own safety to try to save a 4-year-old boy. You could call them heroes, but heroism was not their intention; sometimes in life, valor comes uninvited.

It was 11:28 a.m. on Tuesday, February 11 — a cool 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4.4 degrees Celsius) and sunny in this south Georgia town of about 16,000 residents.

Ryan's grandmother, Peggy Cardona, was running late for work as a hair stylist at the total image: take 2 salon. She had two minutes to spare. She eased her light blue 1990 Nissan Stanza into the employee parking area behind Tifton Mall.

The parking spot was on the border of a well-manicured, grassy 40-foot (12-meter) incline that ended at the edge of a pond — a catch basin for rainwater, 150 meters long and as wide as a football field.

The Nissan's automatic gear-shift was broken, so if she put it in park, it was impossible to change gears. She was used to leaving the car in neutral and setting the emergency brake. This time, she forgot.

Ms. Cardona reached to open the back door for Ryan when the car lurched forward and started to roll. It picked up speed as it moved down the slope. It slid effortlessly, almost gracefully, into the pond.

"Nana! Nana! Nana!" Ryan screamed. He craned his neck for a glimpse of grandma. She was gone.

Devin Batten, 23, was in the mauve stylist's chair waiting for Ms. Cardona. Lanky, with a shock of dark hair, Batten had been coming to her for haircuts since he was 14.

Next door, at Lee's Nail Salon, 30-year-old David Pham was putting the top coat of burgundy polish on a freshly manicured hand.

They both heard the cry: "Help! Help! My car's in the water and my grandson's in there."

Pham, an immigrant from Vietnam, speaks little English. But terrified screams cross language barriers. He and Batten ran outside, where they met Pham's 28-year-old sister, Charlene, who was arriving for work.

The three ran to the water and jumped in.

Behind them were Clint Fountain, 23, and Daniel Tucker, 22, stock clerks at the Winn-Dixie Supermarket. They were taking a break outside, so Fountain could smoke a cigarette, when they heard the screams; Fountain dropped his cigarette, and they ran.

Fountain didn't even stop to take off his black jeans and heavy work shoes before he dived in. The cold water was like a vise around his chest. It was hard to breathe. His head ached the instant he surfaced.

Tucker watched — but only for a moment.

"I can't swim real good," he told Ms. Cardona. "But somebody's gotta help that boy."

He waded slowly into the water and began dog-paddling toward the car, which was now sinking into 15 feet (4.5 meters) of water. He passed Pham and Batten, who had been overcome by the cold water and were heading for shore.

"Hey! Unlock the door you hear me? Unlock the door," Fountain screamed at Ryan. The water was rising to Ryan's waist as the boy frantically pulled at the child-proof locks.

Fountain's fists pounded against the glass.

Dick McClung, 32, a supervisor at Belk's Department Store, heard a commotion. He followed the cries and ran to the water.

His heart was pounding. There was a woman in a white shirt holding a hammer. No one knew where she came from. She was just there. She raised it as if to throw it toward the car.

"Don't don't throw it. You bring me the hammer," Fountain screamed at McClung, who had already shed his sports coat. He gave no thought to his leather shoes, tie or pressed shirt and pants.

He dived in. The cold was paralyzing.

"Oh, Jesus. I'm not going to make it," he thought, halfway to the car.

"Come on! Come on!" Fountain screamed.

By now, the car was tipped nose first in the water, only the rear window and trunk visible. The water had reached Ryan's chest and was steadily rising.

McClung held the hammer out on his last two strokes to the car. Fountain leaned over and grabbed it.

Raising it above his head, fountain brought the hammer down with every ounce of remaining strength, shattering the glass.

Col. Wendel Manning of the Georgia State Patrol heard the police dispatcher's frantic call, and his car was there in moments. In almost one motion, he got out, pulled off his gun belt and ran.

He saw fountain smash the glass. He also saw Fountain's friend Tucker, struggling to stay afloat.

Manning jumped in, forgetting to remove his ankle holster. The frigid water made him gasp for breath. He couldn't seem to move.

In a panic, Tucker grabbed Manning and tried to climb on top of him, dragging them both under. Manning finally had to push Tucker away.

About the same time, passerby Charlie Mock had stopped to see what "all the ruckus was about." He saw a woman — Charlene Pham — floating face down. Mock jumped in and swam toward her.

He rolled her over, grabbed her by the neck and swam for shore. He was 15 feet (4.6 meters) from the bank when he felt something in the water. It was soft.

With his free hand, he reached down and grabbed. He came up with a handful of hair, then pulled Tucker's limp body to the surface.

By now, Manning had caught his breath. He grabbed Tucker and headed for shore. As they neared the bank, others waded in and pulled them to safety.

When the glass shattered, water poured into the car. Fountain and McClung — the Winn-Dixie Clerk and the department store supervisor — pulled Ryan out. He clambered onto Fountain's back.

Fountain took three deep breaths and started to dog-paddle. McClung swam alongside. They were not two feet (60 centimeters) from the car when it sank.

"Man, you gotta take him. I can't do it," Fountain told McClung. He handed off the boy.

Their muscles ached. Every move was agony. Helping hands reached out to bring them ashore.

Paramedics pumped Daniel Tucker's chest for more than a minute before he spat up water and took a breath. He does not remember anything after wading into the water. He spent six days in the hospital with pneumonia.

Charlene Pham came in the ambulance, unsure of much except that she had tried to help. Her brother rode with her.

Fountain and McClung walked past the paramedics, the firefighters, the onlookers They headed for the Belk's store, where they grabbed clothes from the racks. They changed, shook hands and went back to work.

Manning drove back to the patrol post and changed clothes. Batten went home, his hair uncut.

"Nana! Nana!" Ryan screamed, wrestling free of the paramedics. He ran to his grandmother, arms outstretched, tears streaming down his face.

"My colo.ng book!"

The water had claimed only the book and the car.

Two days later, most of Ryan's rescuers came together again, this time for a picture. As Ryan clowned around with the hammer, they shook hands, laughed, retold their stories, and wondered at how heroism can visit average lives. (AP)

Cloning Breakthrough Brings Calls for Crackdown

PARIS — The breakthrough by Scottish scientists in cloning an adult sheep, and its implications for producing genetically identical copies of humans, is sparking a backlash from religious and political leaders.

While all have condemned any extension of such experiments to the human race, some want to see a total ban on cloning of any kind, despite the forecast benefits to man to be derived from duplicating animals.

While all have condemned any extension of such experiments to the human race, some want to see a total ban on cloning of any kind, despite the forecast benefits to man to be derived from duplicating animals.

Italian Health Minister Rosy Bindi told Parliament Wednesday she had issued a decree banning all cloning experiments on humans or animals, pending a decision by deputies on "the status of the embryo and artificial insemination".

Two Polish deputies have called for a ban on all cloning to be inserted into a law currently under debate for the protection of animals, and similar measures have been proposed in Argentina.

Israel's chief rabbi Meir Lau said cloning of any living creature was against Jewish law, and Abdelmo'ti Bayyumi, a theologian from Cairo's Al-Azhar University also said it was "forbidden" on religious grounds.

Pope John-Paul II has warned against carrying out "dangerous experiments" with life, but the Vatican mouthpiece, the *Osservatore Romano* daily, has called only for universal legislation banning cloning of human beings.

A member of the U.S. Congress, representative Vern Ehlers, warned that opposition to cloning in general would mount unless laws were quickly passed to bar using the technique on human beings.

Scientists say that cloning can be used to produce rapidly the best-endowed animals as sources of food and of natural substances used in the treatment of disease.

Identical animals are also ideal for experiments and observations of such phenomena as the development of cancer, while cloning could also increase numbers of endangered species more quickly than traditional breeding.

But the prospect of the production of physically identical human beings has caused widespread alarm.

President Bill Clinton on Tuesday ordered a ban on the use of U.S. government funds for research on human cloning, and urged scientists to impose a voluntary moratorium on work in the field.

"Any discovery that touches upon human creation is not simply a matter of scientific inquiry; it is a matter of morality and spirituality, as well," he said.

He called for a halt on human cloning research until the completion of a review from a presidential panel on bioethics is completed by may.

Clinton acknowledged that the clone research on animals could yield "enormous benefits" for crops, livestock and medical treatments.

But he said such a scientific advance "carries burdens, as well as benefits. Science often moves faster than our ability to understand its implications."

Elsewhere, the Bolivian Parliament on Wednesday passed a law providing for jail terms of up to four years for anyone conducting genetic engineering on humans.

Under proposed legislation in Argentina scientists conducting research that could lead to human cloning may be imprisoned for up to 10 years.

French Junior Health Minister Herve Gaymard said Wednesday that it was "neither foreseeable, nor admissible" that the cloning techniques which had given birth to the sheep named Dolly should be applied to humans.

Ian Wilmut, of Edinburgh's Roslin Institute, who cloned Dolly, told British members of Parliament Thursday that human clones were possible in under two years but said he could not imagine why anyone would want to do it.

"The idea that you can bring back a child, that you can bring back your father, it is simply nonsensical. You can make a genetically identical copy, but you can't get back the person you have lost."

He stressed it was the unanimous view of his research team, and of its companion pharmaceutical company PPL Therapeutics, patent holder on the cloning technique, that human cloning would be offensive and should be banned.

"We would support wholeheartedly the idea of prohibition in the most effective possible way," he said.

"It seems to me if you sit back and think about it that most of the suggested applications for cloning of humans are nonsensical," he said.

"The idea that you can bring back a child, that you can bring back your father, it is simply nonsensical. You can make a genetically identical copy, but you can't get back the person you have lost." (AFP)

Scientists Find Remains of Oldest Flying Reptile

WASHINGTON — A team of German scientists has found a complete skeleton of the oldest-known flying reptile, according to a study in the weekly *Science* magazine, on Friday.

Three paleontologists from the Natural History Museum in Karlsruhe, Germany and Canada's Royal Ontario Museum said the reptile — dubbed coelurosauravus jaekali — roamed the earth some 250 million years ago.

"Coelurosauravus is totally bizarre because in every other animal that flies wing support draws on the normal skeleton" said Hans-Dieter sues of the Royal Ontario Museum, whereas it uses "a winglike fan of bones spreading from each shoulder," according to the study.

The odd bone structure, "independent of the ribcage," should allow scientists to improve their understanding of how other, later vertebrates flew.

Researchers had until now only found incomplete skeletons of coelurosauravus, which was formally identified in 1978. (AFP)

Microsoft Targeting Africa

JOHANNESBURG — Microsoft is to use South Africa as a launchpad into Africa and plans to open eight offices in various parts of the continent within three years, company chairman Bill Gates said here Thursday.

Gates, who arrived in the country earlier Thursday on a two-day marketing tour of South Africa, told reporters Microsoft was planning an aggressive campaign in Africa.

"Africa is one of the most exciting continents we are working in at the moment, and despite its complexities, we see it as one of the fastest growing regions that Microsoft is currently operating in," he said, according to the SAPA news agency.

The group opened branches in Kenya and the Ivory Coast in January, he added.

Gates said he saw good growth of the South African personal computer market, particularly in education and the expansion of the Internet Web.

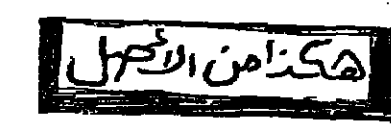
Currently only 34 out of every 1,000 persons, including businesses, operated a personal computer in South Africa, way down on the 300 per 1,000 in the United States.

Gates, during his South African visit, is to meet Microsoft business partners and customers and hold a private meeting with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

The Microsoft chief executive is also to open a community center in Soweto black township near here, one of 100 to Microsoft plans to establish around the country over the next few years.

Gates said Microsoft would encourage local telecommunication institutions and the government to drive up the use of computers and the Internet.

He added that the use of computers was not a choice and companies that did not embrace technology would struggle to compete in the global business environment. (AFP)



International Experts Urge Action to Check Greenhouse Effect

BONN — Members of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said urgent action and intelligent energy use was needed to check global warming.

"We cannot afford to wait to act, but also, that we cannot afford to squander scarce economic resources nor disregard political and other realities," the statement said, following talks on implementing the UN Convention on the Climate.

The IEA, which is part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, underlined that intelligent energy use was a major part of solving the problem of global warming.

"Technological progress requires commitments to long-term investments to achieve further decarbonization of the fuel mix, to promote Co2 capture and storage and to improve end-use energy efficiency," the statement added.



Thursday's statement further called on developing countries "to participate through projects consistent with their domestic energy and development needs."

Meanwhile, Norway said it would fall in with the European Union decision early this week to cut greenhouse gas emissions between 10 and 15 percent by 2010, compared with their 1990 level.

The UN Convention on Climatic Changes, adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992, called on signatories to restore the level of carbon dioxide emissions to their 1990 level by the year 2000.

The Bonn talks aimed to strengthen that convention by setting precise targets for industrialized countries. (AFP)

EU Helps Boost Funds for S. Africa's Higher Education

CAPE TOWN — Government funding for South Africa's higher education in 1997 will be 11 percent higher than last year thanks to contributions from foreign donors, Education Minister Sibusisu Bengu said.

Bengu told a press conference here that total subsidy payments to the country's 21 universities and 15 technikons will amount to 4.9 billion rand (one billion dollars) compared with 4.4 billion rand ($988 million) last year.

Because of an overall increase in the number of students, he added, however, the level of subsidy will amount to 65.59 percent of their costs compared to the current 68 percent.

Bengu said that, for the first time, money — 166 million rand ($37 million) — was donated directly to the government's education fund by overseas donors, particularly the European Union (EU).

The donations are earmarked for "redress programs" aimed at helping institutions and students formerly disadvantaged by the apartheid system.

"The main bulk of the assistance comes from the EU," Bengu said.

"It has come at a time when we were desperate and I would not guarantee that we would every year rely on that assistance." Bengu's announcement comes amid a surge in demonstrations on university campuses and a growing debate over the future of higher education in South Africa.

He had acknowledged in December that figures proposed by the Finance Ministry for the higher education sector, which will appear in the government's annual budget to be presented in Parliament next week, were sharply down.

Bengu said: "I want to express my ministry's deep appreciation of the generosity of citizens, taxpayers and governments in the countries abroad — friends of South Africa — which have made these commitments to our higher education system." (AFP)

UN Official Says Burundi Children Need Food

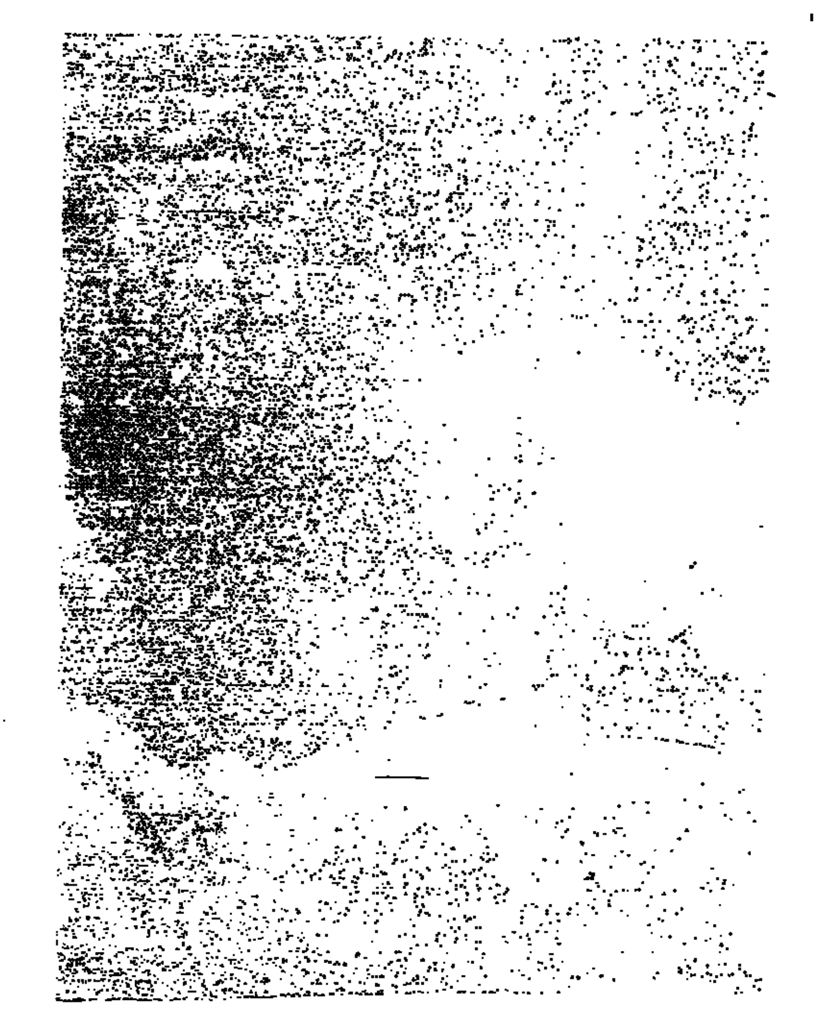
UNITED NATIONS — A UN official said he had spotted malnutrition among children in Burundi relocated to special areas by that country's Tutsi-led military government.

He also said that African states, which have put trade sanctions on Burundi because of a military coup there last summer, were slow to approve humanitarian aid that was exempt under the embargoes.

Martin Griffiths, the UN humanitarian aid coordinator for Central Africa who recently visited Burundi, told a news conference that the government had instituted a policy of relocating Hutus to camps as a security measure to take them out of areas of conflict.

This policy, according to those authorities, is a voluntary one. But I think it is quite clear that the area of choice for those being regrouped is limited, he said.

He said he saw degrees of malnutrition in children which are disgraceful. Malnutrition also had been spotted in other areas of the Burundi, whose problems he said were quickly forgotten by the outside world.



The dilemma now for aid agencies, he said, was whether to provide assistance to those who had been relocated without appearing to support the government's policy. A meeting will take place shortly to formulate a policy.

More than 150,000 people have died in massacres and civil war between the Tutsi-dominated army and Hutu rebels since the 1993 assassination of its first freely elected Hutu president.

A power-sharing civilian government was then overthrown in an army coup last July 25. Military ruler Pierre Buyoya, hit by regional sanctions against his government, promised peace talks with Hutu groups but they have not started.

Griffiths said that getting aid and other provisions, including fuel for humanitarian groups, was difficult and frequently delayed by a regional sanctions committee. Most recently he said applications for fertiliser, education materials and small farming tools were pending.

We find this hard to understand, he said.

At other times permission for imports were given by the committee but local authorities in border states refused to allow the goods to move. (Reuter)

Zairean Government Acknowledges Fighting Near Kisangani

KISANGANI, Zaire — Hundreds of people were fleeing Kisangani, the last government stronghold in eastern Zaire, as the Defense Ministry acknowledged clashes with rebels just 80 kilometers (50 miles) away.

Fighting in Panga, northeast of Kisangani, had left 114 rebels dead, the ministry said, acknowledging for the first time the presence of rebels so close to the Garrison town where the government has based its stuttering counter-offensive.

In a statement read over the phone to AFP, the ministry also said that its soldiers had repelled a rebel attack in the same area, killing seven of them.

Early Thursday, hundreds of residents gathered at the bustling quays of the Zaire River to Bargain for a place on a craft leaving Kisangani towards the west.

Behind the Palm Beach Hotel, an air-conditioned luxury hotel used by mercenaries brought in by the struggling Zairean Army, boats were leaving, crammed full of residents desperate to get out.

Mainly Tutsi rebel forces have been closing in on Kisangani — and were reportedly just a few kilometers (miles) outside the town of around 500,000 people.

Meanwhile, despite international appeals, there was no indication that rebel leader laurent-desire Kabila would call a halt to his successful campaign that has already claimed the eastern flank of Zaire.

Zaire's ruler of three decades' standing, Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, and the Kinshasa government said they accepted a UN peace plan, but the rebels ruled it out.

"The UN peace plan works to our disadvantage. To impose a cease-fire is to be against us," the "Justice Minister" in the rebel alliance, Kongolo Mwenze, told AFP.

He was speaking in the town of Kindu, south of Kisangani, which fell last sunday to the rebels in a major setback to the armed forces, who lost the airport they had used to refuel aircraft striking at the guerrillas.

On Thursday, Zaire's government expelled 11 UN relief workers, accusing them of abandoning Rwandan Hutus at the Tingi-Tingi camp, between Kindu and Kisangani, to face massacre by the advancing rebels.

Zairean demands for the expulsion of workers from nongovernmental organizations appeared to have been dropped. The government said that some 25,000 abandoned refugees had been massacred by the rebels, but the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) declared that it had no such information.

Nevertheless, the UNHCR expressed concern at unconfirmed reports of common graves near the camps of Mugunga, Kimbuba, Katale and Sake, close to Lake Kivu near the Rwandan border, where the rebels launched their insurrection in October.

The rebels, who have vowed to take Kisangani and March on Kinshasa, have said they will not lay down their arms until Mobutu quits power.

Mobutu is currently in nice, France, for a medical check-up following prostate surgery last August amid uncertainty over when he would return to Zaire.

The five-point peace plan he has accepted calls for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and Mercenaries, negotiations and elections, and the protection of refugees.

Thousands of refugees meanwhile began arriving in the Zaire river city of Ubundu, 150 kilometers (90 miles) south of Kisangani, after a six-day trek from Tingi-Tingi, the last big camp in eastern Zaire, 250 kilometers (150 miles) southeast of Kisangani.

Dutch Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk reported after flying over the area Wednesday that others among the up to 160,000 refugees who fled Tingi-Tingi were approaching Kisangani.

But the vast majority of the Tingi-Tingi refugees were apparently heading for Ubundu.

Several relief agencies said they were planning to deliver relief supplies by rail Friday from Kisangani to Ubundu.

UN regional coordinator Martin Griffiths said that plans to repatriate almost 400,000 Rwandans remaining in Zaire were well in hand, but added that the creation of safe corridors depended on the issue of security and separating ordinary Hutus from members of the Rwandan former army, routed by a Tutsi front in 1994, and Hutu extremist militiamen.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns ruled out the envisaged deployment of a multinational force in Zaire at least until the United Nations had managed to set up the humanitarian corridors. Washington has asked the rebels to agree to this.

In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's spokesman said the UN chief believes aid workers and refugees in eastern Zaire must be protected with or without a cease-fire. (AFP)

May Date Floated for Possible Cyprus Summit in New York

UNITED NATIONS — The Greek foreign minister pointed to an opportunity for possible direct talks between the Cypriot president and the breakaway Turkish Cypriot leader in New York in May.

Following a meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos was asked by Greek journalists whether there would be a May summit between President Glafcos Clerides, a Greek Cypriot, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash.

Pangalos, speaking in Greek, responded by saying that Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis and Clerides would be in New York in May for a UN event which would provide "a good opportunity" for such a meeting to take place.

However Western diplomats cautioned that other dates have been floated for a possible summit, but that Clerides and Denktash have not met since October 1994.

The Greek Foreign Minister added that Annan was preparing to take an initiative on Cyprus in the coming months, but did not give details.

He stressed however that the United Nations should play the leading role in seeking a political solution for the divided eastern Mediterranean island.

Annan said in January that he hoped for a meeting between the two "in the coming months." His special envoy Han Sung-Joo visited Cyprus last month.

Cypriot government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides, quoted by the official news agency CNA, announced that indirect talks between the two communities would take place next Monday with a view to preparing a possible summit.

UN special representative for Cyprus Gustave Feissel is to mediate the latest round of talks, focusing on UN proposals for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. (AFP)

China's Tropical Island Tells Tourists to Tarry

YALONG BAY, China — The sea is an inviting emerald green, the sand is golden under his shoes and the sun beats warm on his back — but nothing will persuade Shi Kaixing to linger at China's newest tourist paradise.

I'll stay an hour at most .. I've got work to do, said the 44-year-old private businessman as he strolled along Yalong Bay beach in the southern island province of Hainan.

Officials in Hainan, where holiday-makers account for a hefty 10 percent of the provincial economy, say Shi is all too typical of the Chinese visitors who are the mainstay of the local tourism industry.



Changing the tourist culture to persuade domestic visitors to stay longer and spend more was the key to cashing in on Hainan's tropical blessings, said Li Yingji, deputy director of the Provincial Tourism Administration.

Our purpose is to get people to spend their vacations here.

Currently most visitors just come for a quick look, he said.

We don't want to chase the sightseers. .. They are not very helpful for our economy, agreed Yu Peisheng, tourism chief in the southern Hainan city of Sanya, which channelled 200 million toward development of the Yalong Bay resort in 1995 and 1996.

The bay, a long arc of even sand and clear water, is the centerpiece of a tourism strategy that aims to turn virgin beaches, untapped hot springs and colorful ethnic minorities into the basis of an tourist hothouse economy.

Officials eager to create recreational possibilities are backing the construction of scenic spots, golf courses and resort hotels to tempt tourists to tarry longer.

Warm welcome for free-spending foreigners. We hope people can stop and stay for a few days, Yu said, adding that free-spending organized groups of foreign vacationers were the most welcome tourists of all.

While Japanese visitors spent an average 1,500 yuan (180) for each of the average four days they stayed, Chinese visitors spent just 400 yuan and left after only 1.4 days, Yu said.

But despite a clutch of new luxury hotels and steadily improving links with the outside world, foreigners remain few and far between on Hainan beaches.

Of the 2.45 million visitors who passed through Sanya in 1996, just three percent came from abroad — and 80 percent of those were overseas Chinese from Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan.

Hainan officials plan to boost publicity in Asia and Europe to attract well-heeled tour groups, but say it can be difficult to compete with the pacific region's more developed resorts.

While officials rush to build seaside hotels, they also argue that past neglect of the beaches that account for most of Hainan's 1,528 km (949 miles) of coastline can itself be a strong selling point for some visitors.

The determination to get more out of Hainan's tourist resources is plain on Sanya's Dadonghai Bay, which just five years ago was a placid beach front peopled largely by backpackers and foreign students escaping northern China's bitter winter.

Now the bay is backed by rows of jutting hotel complexes, the dusty road to town has been widened and beach entrepreneurs offer high-priced scuba-diving lessons and sailboards for hire.

The high-rise hotels, along with Sanya's spanking new international airport and the three-lane highway that links the city to the provincial capital Haikou, are signs of the progress made in modernizing an island known on the mainland for centuries as a remote and malarial backwater.

While many of the new hotels and restaurants have far to go to catch up with their rising prices and brochured promises, the tourism industry has already become a vital part of the economy of what is China's biggest special economic zone.

Officials say tourist takings have eased the economic slowdown that followed a speculation-fired boom in 1994, while also helping fill some of the properties left empty when the bubble burst and the bottom fell out of the real estate market.

Income from domestic tourists in 1996 is estimated at more than 840 million, with foreign tourists seen adding a further 85 million, said tourist administrator Li Yingji.

In all, 4. 86 million international and domestic tourists visited the island last year, Li said.

Between 1990 and 1995, the number of domestic and international tourists we received in Hainan rose by an average 36.8 percent every year, he said. That's pretty fast growth.

Turning China's millions of sightseers into vacationers was the best way to retain such growth in future years, he said.

On Yalong Bay beach, Zhang Chunxi, a manager from the arid northwestern region of Xinjiang, seemed ready to have his holiday habits reformed.

This is a fine beach, said Zhang, hauling waterproofs over his business clothes in preparation for his first jet-ski ride, a highlight of his one-day tour of Hainan.

Next time, if possible, I'll bring my wife and children, he said. I'd be very willing to stay for a vacation. (Reuter)

Albanian Journalist Abducted After His Paper Is Torched

ROME — An Albanian journalist was severely beaten and kidnapped a day after his Tirana newspaper, *Koha Jone*, was ransacked and set on fire, the paper's Rome correspondent reported Wednesday.

Angela Vincentini said the correspondent was beaten and abducted on a road about 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of the southern coastal city Vlore on Tuesday. She did not identify the journalist.

The previous night, she said, unidentified men armed with machine-guns destroyed the paper's computers and its archives for the last 10 years during their attack.

She said police had previously threatened the paper's staff.

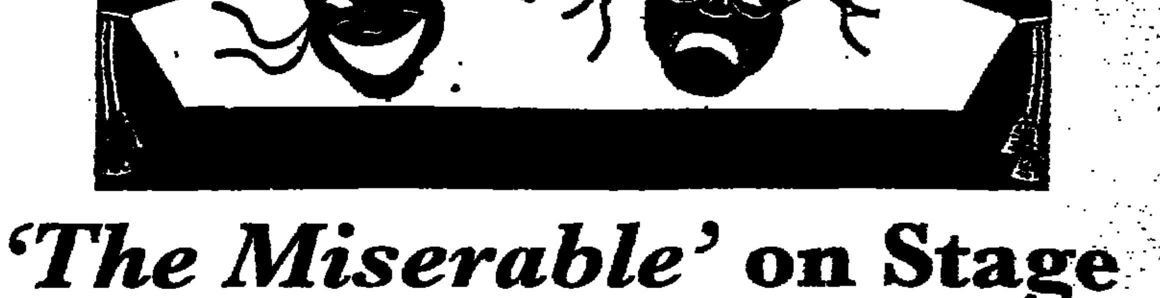
(AFP)

Daily Food for Thought

On Ambition

T is a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Where to the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the utmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Julius Caesar



'The Miserable' on Stage by Well-to-Do

Tehran Times Service

Preface

TEHRAN — Traditional Criticism focused only on the aesthetic aspects of theater. Any diversion from the traditional set-up of drama — even a critic's brainchild — was harshly criticized.

This kind of criticism, which enjoyed its climax in the 19th century, later became a means of publicity for drama.

Presenting definitions of a special drama, created a prejudgment in the minds of theatergoers, sometimes tempting them to go and watch the piece. Or on the other hand, the definitions created a negative impact on the mind.

Generally speaking, any drama had to go through critics' filter. Whichever piece of drama identified to be 'according to the traditional framework of drama set forth by Greek and Roman scholars,' was welcome.

It should be mentioned, however, that this strict attitude toward drama on the part of the critics never stemmed from their bad-will or something, rather it rose from their views widely accepted then — not today, though.

Today, we are in dire need of a kind of criticism to pay attention to aesthetic aspects of a drama, and analyze the socio-political elements within a piece of art — a new point of view from behind the scene.

Today's critic teaches modern aspects of drama, ways of conveying meaning, and it tries to originate the thought that today's theatergoer is a part of drama himself. It emphasizes that his reaction against a piece of art is efficient in the policy-making of the responsible authorities of drama. Critics assert the theatergoer should have three arts in mind: the arts of writer, actor/actress, and theatergoer.

This short article has no intention of going further into the framework of traditional and modern criticism. Rather, it is a preface to a critique on a play, The Miserables.

It goes without saying that today, criticism is regarded as a scientific and artistic endeavor.

The Miserable

Director: Behrooz Gharibpoor

Cast: Mahdi Fathi, Behzad Farahani, Roya Teimourian, Shams Fazlollahi, etc.

The Miserable of Victor Hugo is one of the most distinguished novels in French literature, but not a powerful piece in the globe.

It has been filmed and dramatized several times. This time it has been dramatized in Bahman Farhangsara (Cultural House) by Behrooz Gharibpoor who has the piece on stage relying on the novel and with a glance at the filmed versions.

Regarding the stage setting, The Miserable is unique in the history of Iranian drama created by Khosro Khorshidi, an educate of Arts University and master of stage setting.

Over a hundred actors and actresses, all clad in colorful clothes, give a memorable scene to the play. The existing play, adapted from the novel, does not contain the spirit of Hugo's The Miserable.

A theatergoer who has not read the novel or has not watched its adaptations, faces a chaotic story line and cannot make connections with the play.

The present play introduces bites from the novel in no logical connection.

The first act introduces Jean val Jean, his hard times and the cruel behavior of people with him. Next act introduces the patriarch and Jean's visit to him. His spiritual revolution is displayed through dialog only.

Hugo in his novel, takes a one-dimentional view at the characters which takes him away from the psychology of his characters. Gharibpoor repeats the mistake. Another weakpoint in the play is applying ultra sensitive microphones which makes the dialogs devoid of any emotion.

Lack of acceptable design for director, improper lighting (in a way that in some cases it is difficult to say who's who, also in some other cases a part of stage is lighted without any purpose) are other weakpoints prevalent in the The Miserable.

And to end, Shahid Avini Hall is too long for such a play. Stage changes in a hall like this takes almost one hour on the whole.

Generally speaking, at a time when various theater groups are in dire need of the least budget and facilities, how one can justify this extravagant investment (accordingly Rls. 2000,000,000) on an outlandish play like this? Sure it is not going to be of any benefit to the theater of the country.



